

Kings Cross was very busy that morning. It was September first and people were bustling every which way in the underground (subway). None of the business men or women took notice that there were a few people dressed oddly among them. Their collective sight passed over the red headed family, dressed in clothing more appropriate of thirty years ago, making their way toward platforms nine and ten. The sight of four trolleys loaded with trunks, one with a caged owl, being pushed by various boys within this family also passed by their notice. That was the way of muggles, ignore whatever doesn't fit.

Only fifteen minutes earlier different muggles had allowed themselves to not see the blond aristocrat, dressed straight out of a Victorian painting, escort three children to the separator between platforms nine and ten. They had again taken no notice of the four as they leaned against the barrier only to fade through it seconds later. By the time the red headed family had reached the barrier, the few muggles who had shaken their heads at the disappearance of the aristocrat and children had moved off.

Platform nine and three quarters was alive with ill disguised witches and wizards, uncomfortable muggle parents, and lots of children. The Hogwarts Scarlet Steam Engine caught the imagination of parent and child alike. Wizarding parents remembered the magic it opened for them while muggle parents marveled at the possibilities it implied for their children. Every child found themselves bubbling with anticipation, for new adventure or a return to the wonder of Hogwarts. The throng of humanity had noted the presence of Lucius Malfoy and his three charges only enough not to crowd them. Other than a few other students, the Weasley family was even more un-remarked by the assembled families.

The last car had three empty compartments and Lucius helped his son and his other two charges with their trunks. With no one able to see his face except the children, Lucius smiled kindly. He spoke softly, "Be careful, be cunning and have fun, all of you. I'll pick you up for the Christmas holidays." Then he gave a gentle hug to the little boy with blond hair, blue-gray eyes, and elfin features. "I love you, my little dragon," he whispered quietly.

His son nodded, "I love you too father."

Then he hugged the dark haired boy, "Be very cautious about trusting anyone, my young lord."

"I will uncle Lucius, thank you for bringing us," the boy said as he pulled away, allowing emerald eyes to meet steel gray as they separated.

Finally he hugged the raven haired girl, "Take care of your brother and my son. Always remember who you are and never doubt that I will be there in an instant if you need me, my princess."

"Thank you uncle Lucius, I will remember. May your journey home be safe and uneventful." Her voice was soft as she pulled away.

Lucius nodded to the three children, turned and left. His long powerful stride took him from the train quickly. The crowd on platform nine and three quarters fell back from the powerful wizard in fear, awe or loathing; he didn't notice.

Draco Malfoy and the dark heirs smirked at one another. The dark heiress spoke into the quiet created by Lucius' departure, "I'm going to go find Blaise." The two boys nodded. She tossed her onyx locks out of her sapphire eyes and headed into the corridor.

Stormy blue-gray eyes met emerald green in silent understanding and friendship. Draco studied his best friend for a few moments while a comfortable silence descended around them. The quietude broke as the dark heir asked, "Drake are you excited about going to Hogwarts?"

"You bet, but if some freak thing happens and you two don't end up in Slytherin..."

"Stop! There is no way in hell we will be anywhere else. We are the dark heirs, blood of Slytherin. What other house could either of us possibly be in?"

"Ravenclaw," whispered Draco.

The dark heir's laughter echoed in response and greeted his sister as she entered with Blaise. The heiress smirked and Blaise shook her head. The four future serpents and best friends settled down to enjoy the ride to Hogwarts. The only interruption was the appearance of a bushy haired muggle-born who was looking for Neville Longbottom's toad. The Serpentine Quartet sent her away empty handed and without any introductions. That would wait until after the sorting.

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Excerpt from "The Daily Prophet" November 3rd 1981:

BOY-WHO-LIVED

MISSING

By

Rita

Skeeter

Harold James Potter, the Boy-who-lived, savior of the wizarding world, is missing. Sources revealed to this reporter that yesterday morning disaster followed the boy who lived to his muggle family's home. The orphaned savior was orphaned again within two days of his parents' death by the brutal murder of his muggle aunt and uncle. But apparently killing the adults was not horrendous enough; the killer(s) left Harry's cousin, only a few months older, in the lawn and took our savior.

Revered Wizard Albus Dumbledore had placed your Harry Potter with his muggle relatives, Vernon and Petunia Dursley because there were ancient magics to keep him safe. Apparently those magics do not apply to sick twisted muggles or muggle weapons. It has been revealed that the murders were done with guns, muggle wands used to kill, and that no magical residue was found anywhere on the house. Headmaster Dumbledore has assured us that he has the entire Order of the Phoenix out looking for your Potter.

We at the Daily Prophet pray that whoever has young Harry Potter returns him soon. We also hope You-Know-Who's followers have not found him. With You-Know-Who's banishment at the hands of young Potter, it is highly probably that his supporters would kill our savior. If you have any information regarding Harry Potter or You-Know-Who's followers please contact your nearest Auror office.

Excerpt from "The Dailey Prophet" December 4th 1981

WIZARDING

WORLD

AT

PEACE?

By

Leon

Lunaris

The Ministry of Magic announced today that You-Know-Who is dead. Over a month ago Harold Potter, the boy-who-lived, survived the Killing curse and "banished" the most evil Dark Lord in centuries. The Ministry revealed that they have conducted extensive searches over the last month and have determined that the dark lord is actually dead, not simply banished as was formerly believed.

Since You-Know-Who's defeat Death Eater activity has fallen to

none. There has not been an attack on wizard or muggle in almost four weeks. It seems as though the dark days have passed and we can smile again. The wizarding world is finally at peace, hopefully a longer lasting peace than what followed Grindelwald's defeat.

As beautiful as everything seems, there is still one dark black cloud marring a perfectly blue sky. The savior boy-who-lived is still missing. Sirius Black, Potter's godfather, is leading the aurors searching for the boy. In spite of having proved his innocence concerning allegations of Death Eater loyalty and accessory to murder, there are still some members of the Ministry who think Black is guilty and shouldn't be allowed to remain an auror. As the Dailey Prophet reported in the Black Trial early last month, Sirius Black is not a Death Eater, Not a Dark Wizard, and only wishes to find and raise his godson.

Will this peace last or is it only a reprieve between Dark Storms?
Only time will tell.

Excerpt from "The Dailey Prophet" October 31st 1982

THE PEACE HAS LASTED BUT SADNESS REMAINS

By

Rita

Skeeter

One year ago today the strangle hold of the Dark Lord broke because of one little boy. This is the one year anniversary of James and Lily Potter's death at the hands of You-Know-Who. It is also a day to rejoice as we remember You-Know-Who met his death scant minutes later. Harold Potter, the only child of James and Lily Potter, somehow survived the killing curse and destroyed You-Know-Who. Two days later the Potters found their final resting place in Godric Hollow's cemetery. Not one full day after that Harold Potter was kidnapped following the horrible murder of his muggle relatives.

Since the time of these tragedies the wizarding world has known peace. Death Eaters, You-Know-Who's followers, have not caused any trouble since the death of their Dark Lord. Many have been arrested and are serving life sentences in Azkaban. Due to this wonderful news all would seem right in the world, but one darkness remains.

Harold Potter is still missing. The ministry has decided to call off its search for the savoir of the wizarding world. In response top auror Sirius Black quit his job with the ministry. He says he will continue to

search for his godson until he finds the boy or die trying. We here at the Dailey Prophet wish him luck in his search and pray that Harold James Potter is safe wherever he is.

Chapter 2

The Sorting Of Serpents

Albus Dumbledore paced the breadth of the Great Hall, directly in front of the teacher's table. His bright purple robes fluttered with each step as his long white beard lost its tip in the folds of said robe. His half moon spectacles drooped on his face and his normally twinkling blue eyes were dull with worry and uncertainty.

Minerva McGonagall watched him with concern in her dark kind eyes. Her slightly graying black hair was held in a severe bun and her own glasses rested on the bridge of her nose. She released a sigh and said, "Albus please stop pacing. I'm sure he will be on the train and will be here shortly."

The headmaster abruptly stopped and looked at his deputy headmistress. "I know he will be, but that is why I'm worried," Albus said. "His acceptance owl created more questions than I thought imaginable. It implied that he knows all about the wizarding world while casting some of his attitudes in a disturbing light. I need to know who raised him, where he's been living, and if he can be the hero the light needs him to be."

"You're certainly putting a lot on his famous shoulders," commented Severus as he stalked into the Hall with his black robes billowing dramatically. "But you might want to not speak of anything else connected with him. The other teachers are only minutes behind me and the carriages are heading up to the castle."

"Of course, Severus," Albus replied, "let us sit, our students will be here soon."

Draco, Blaise, and the dark heirs took a boat together. Their first vision of the castle was breath taking. Hogwarts stood silhouetted against a star strewn sky and a crescent moon hung just above its highest turret. The dark gray stone seemed to glisten and twinkle in the dim light of the celestial majesty. The wonder it inspired in their hearts was universal among the first years.

The huge man led the first years up many stairs, quiet a few were dangerously slick. The Serpentine Quartet balanced using one another and by avoiding their fellow first years. The stairs ended in a large entrance hall where a heavy double door stood closed to them. The giant of a man knocked and a stern looking woman opened it. She was wearing a dark jade green dress and her dark eyes glanced over the students. She dismissed the gamekeeper and turned her attention to the students.

As Professor McGonagall expounded on the virtues of each house, Draco, Blaise and the heirs tuned her out. They instead studied their fellow students. Draco and Blaise recognized many of the other students and knew that the dark heirs did as well. It was the clearly muggle-born and the ones easily identified as light family wizards that the heirs focused on. The heiress took special note of Neville Longbottom as he interrupted Professor McGonagall when his toad, Trevor, showed up. The professor then left, telling them to smarten themselves up.

The first years whispered to their neighbors about what the sorting was all about. After hearing the red head say that his brother said they had to wrestle a troll, the Quartet tuned out the other first years as well. A scream caught their attention, all four with wands at the ready and a hex on their lips; they put their wands away as the Hogwarts ghosts floated through the Hall talking about a poltergeist named Peeves. They smirked at the fear showing on faces around them. They didn't have time to say anything else though because Professor McGonagall had returned.

The stern looking witch led the flustered first years in two lines down the center of the great hall. The Ravenclaws to the left were impassive while the Gryffindor table to the right had lots of smiles and thumbs up. The fuzzy haired girl who had been looking for Neville's toad told the muggle-born beside her that the ceiling was charmed to look like the sky. At the front of the room was a stool with a frayed, dirty, old witch's hat sitting on top. Silence descended on the Great Hall and the rim of the hat ripped open. It began to sing.

"Oh,	you	may	not	think	I'm	pretty,
But	don't	judge	on	what	you	see,

I'll eat myself if you can find
 A smarter hat than me.
 You can keep your bowlers black,
 Your top hats sleek and tall,
 For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat
 And I can cap them all.
 There's nothing hidden in your head
 The Sorting Hat can't see,
 So try me on and I will tell you
 Where you ought to be.
 You might belong in Gryffindor,
 Where dwell the brave at heart,
 Their daring, nerve, and chivalry
 Set Gryffindors apart;
 You might belong in Hufflepuff,
 Where they are just and loyal,
 Those patient Hufflepuffs are true,
 And unafraid of toil;
 Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
 If you've a ready mind,
 Where those of wit and learning,
 Will always find their kind;
 Or perhaps in Slytherin
 You'll make your real friends,
 Those cunning folk use any means
 To achieve their ends;
 So put me on! Don't be afraid!
 And don't get in a flap!
 You're in safe hands (though I have none)
 For I'm a Thinking Cap!"

The hall exploded in applause and the hat motioned in a parody of a bow. Professor McGonagall then unrolled a scroll and said, "When I call you name, please come up and try on the hat. After you know your house you will then join them."

Professor McGonagall Sorting Hat

"Abbott, Hannah" ----- "Hufflepuff"

"Abercrombie, Alice"	-----	"Gryffindor"
"Bones, Susan"	-----	"Hufflepuff"
"Boot, Terry"	-----	"Ravenclaw"
"Brocklehurst, Mandy"	-----	"Ravenclaw"
"Brown, Lavender"	-----	"Gryffindor"
"Bulstrode, Millicent"	-----	"Slytherin"
"Cauldwell, Owen"	-----	"Hufflepuff"
"Corner, Michael"	-----	"Ravenclaw"
"Crabbe, Vincent"	-----	"Slytherin"
"Dobbs, Emma"	-----	"Hufflepuff"
"Finnigan, Seamus"	-----	"Gryffindor"
"Finch-Fletchey, Justin"	-----	"Hufflepuff"
"Longbottom, Neville"	-----	"Gryffindor"
"Granger, Hermione"	-----	"Gryffindor"
"Goyle, Gregory"	-----	"Slytherin"
"MacDougal, Morag"	-----	"Ravenclaw"
"Macmillan, Ernie"	-----	"Hufflepuff"
"Malfoy, Draco"	-----	"Slytherin"
"Moon, Nathaniel"	-----	"Ravenclaw"
"Nott, Theodore"	-----	"Slytherin"
"Parkinson, Pansy"	-----	"Slytherin"
"Patil, Padma"	-----	"Ravenclaw"
"Patil, Parvati"	-----	"Gryffindor"

"Perkins, Sally-Anne"----- "Hufflepuff"

Professor McGonagall said, "Potter, Harry," and the Hall came alive with whispers and students craning their necks to get a look at who stepped forward. The boy who stepped from the remaining students was slight. He was whip-like thin with long brown hair held in a band at the nape of his neck. His skin was a golden bronze from healthy doses of sunshine. He walked with a grace and regal bearing that seemed against his youth. His head was high as he stepped up to the stool, ignoring the whispers. His cool emerald gaze swept the Hall just before the hat was dropped over his eyes.

Harry heard a little voice in his mind, **Hello Mr. Potter. My, my you are a tough one. You have the qualities of every house, you could go anywhere. I see that you are brave, loyal, a veritable genius, and ambitious. Now where to put you?**

I prefer Slytherin, Harry thought back to the hat.

Slytherin, eh, yes you could do quite well there. You would meet you're truest friends and gain advantages in that house, but are you sure you wish for your guardian's old house and not your father's house?

I will follow in the footsteps of my mother and father! Place me in Slytherin! Harry commanded the hat.

The Hat screamed, "Slytherin!"

The Great Hall was eerily silent as Harry took off the Sorting Hat. Three of the four tables were completely still and the fourth seemed to hold its collective breath until Draco Malfoy stood up and began the standing ovation which quickly swept over the Slytherin table. The other three tables erupted in whispers as Harry sat across from Draco.

Professor McGonagall reached down to pick up the scroll of names. She had dropped it in shock. There were no "Q" names so she moved on to the "R" names. Her eyes widened and she almost dropped the scroll again. Her eyes met Dumbledore's in concern, causing him to raise an eyebrow. She said in a voice that quivered

slightly, "Riddle, Kira." The name caught the attention of Severus and quite a few Slytherins.

Kira was the same height as Harry and even thinner. Her onyx black hair cascaded down to her lower back while framing her delicate facial features. Her blue eyes sparkled like freshly polished sapphires. The overall affect was a fey like quality. She walked with even more grace and poise than Harry had. She sat upon the stool. As Minerva lowered the Hat toward her head, Kira heard within her mind, **the heir**, while the Hat screamed, "Slytherin" for the entire Hall to hear. The Hat hadn't even fully touched her head before announcing its answer. Minerva could feel a slight quivering from the Sorting Hat as she moved it away from Kira's head. The Slytherin table gave another standing ovation as Kira smirked at her new housemates before sitting next to Harry.

"Rookwood, Marcus"----- "Hufflepuff"

"Thomas, Dean"----- "Gryffindor"

"Turnip, Lisa" -----"Ravenclaw"

"Weasley, Ronald"----- "Gryffindor"

"Zabini, Blaise"----- "Slytherin"

As Blaise sat down with her three best friends as Professor McGonagall took the Sorting Hat and stool away. Headmaster Dumbledore stood, "Welcome to another year at Hogwarts, now lets tuck in to this most excellent feast." Food appeared on the tables and the students dug into their meals.

During the feast the Quartet spoke with their fellow first years. All of them were from strong pureblood lines which were loyal to Kira's father. It was no surprise when the five of them said they would help the dark heirs anyway they could. Kira and Harry merely inclined their heads in thanks. While speaking in quiet voices a silvery form floated up through the table. The ghost was gruesomely dark looking with silver blood covering his form. The Quartet bowed slightly as Harry said, "Your Bloodiness, we are honored that you came to see we unworthy first years."

The Bloody Baron looked them over with a critical eye and then said, "Do not disappoint me by failing to bring glory to Slytherin House. Also if Peeves gives you any trouble, just let me know and I will deal with him." He then floated through Kira as he left the first years to their meal. The older students who had been watching were silently impressed by the fact that Kira didn't as much as shiver as the specter moved through her.

The raised staff table was also alive with quiet contemplation on the placement of Harry Potter. Minerva, Albus and Severus were more concerned with the fact that Voldemort's daughter was here and apparently already knew Potter. Albus asked Severus to bring Harry up to his office after the feast so that he could talk to the boy. Severus agreed and went back to studying Potter and Riddle.

Severus knew Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, and Nott were all the children of 'former' Death Eaters. He was fairly certain Bulstrode, Parkinson, and Zabini were as well. He vowed to watch this class extremely closely. When the Bloody Baron passed through Kira, a chill of dread ran down his spine at her lack of response. His left arm ached in remembered pain at the sight of her. He also wondered why he had not been sent any warning about her attendance to Hogwarts.

After the feast ended and the dishes magically cleaned themselves of the deserts, Minerva chimed her fork against her glass. Albus stood up and smiled at the students. "Now that we have completed this most delicious feast, I'm afraid I have a few announcements to make before you head off to bed. First a reminder to all returning students, there is to be no magic in the hall between classes. Mr. Filch has also added five new items to his list contraband; a complete list is posted outside his office. Also the forest on the grounds is forbidden to all students, some older students would do well to remember that," his gaze seemed to rest on a red headed twins at the Gryffindor table, "In addition it should be noted by all students that the third floor corridor is off limits to anyone who does not wish to die a most horrible death. Now then please follow your prefects and have a pleasant year."

A few foolish Hufflepuffs and Gryffindors laughed uneasily at the third floor corridor announcement. The Quartet couldn't believe that anyone could laugh at a death threat. The first years were gathered

up by their prefects and herded off toward their various dorm entrances.

Chapter 3

Welcome to Slytherin

As they had been taught all their lives, the Quartet observed everything around them. They took note of how many hallways they passed, staircases they walked under, unique doors and picture frames. The minds that had been honed by careful meditation and training created a mental map of the route from the Great Hall to the Slytherin dungeons.

The dark gray mortar and stonework was interrupted by heavy thick wooden doors. At seemingly random intervals black slate 'doorway' appeared. The black slate was carefully contained by beautifully detailed carvings. The carvings were all identical and featured two snakes whose tails curled against the wall near the floor while their bodies arched up until their heads met at the summit of the arch. Between the snakes' heads was the crest of Hogwarts. Each of the three dungeon hallways they traveled had thirteen of these carvings.

The prefect, Horas Erickson, stopped in front of one of the carvings. He turned to the students and said, "This is the entrance of the Slytherin dorms. You say the password and the black center will become passable. We decided to go for irony this year and chose a password no other house would think we would use. The password is Godric Gryffindor." As he said the password the snake carvings hissed **what a stupid password** and the black slate rippled, "If you say it to the wrong carving, the snakes' eyes will turn red." He then entered the common room.

As the first years stepped through the portal Severus Snape studied them. He watched at they crowded in front of him and waited for the few whispers to end. Horas had been waiting with him, "This is our Head of House, Professor Snape. He has some words to say before I show you to the dorms."

Severus looked over this year's bunch of Slytherins and wondered how many he would be able to save from the dark lord, all of them were children of 'known' Death Eaters. He did not fail to notice the apparent closeness of Malfoy, Potter, Riddle, and Zabini. He couldn't really wrap his mind around the fact that James' Potter's son had

gotten into Slytherin, the fact that he was Lily's son didn't even enter into the equation. He hoped the Headmaster would be able to get some answers out of the spoiled little brat after when he spoke with him that night.

Severus' voice was silky smooth as he began, "Welcome to the House of Serpents. There are only a few necessary rules for surviving in Slytherin house, all the other rules are survival tips. The rules I speak of can be found in the book on the mantle, it is charmed so that it cannot leave the common room. The essential rules you must all obey are these. Never completely trust anyone, not in this house and especially not in any other house, unless you have enough dirt to ensure their loyalty. Never publicly dispute with your fellow Slytherins, your solidarity outside of this room is paramount. Never forget that the other houses and teachers are waiting for you to prove you are future dark witches and wizards, and no matter what you do, they will always believe that is your path. I expect you to support one another outside of this room, if you have internal disputes speak with me or deal with it in private. You will make your greatest allies and worst enemies within these walls, but do not let that affect your words or actions outside of them. I will always be available to give you advice, but I do not condone fools within my House. If you are going to do anything questionable DO NOT GET CAUGHT, if you do your most severe punishment will be from me. Now then Mr. Erickson will show the rest of you to your dorms while I have another word with Mr. Potter."

Horas said, "This way," and led the students off toward the back of the common room. He could be heard saying, "boys to the left; girls to the right," as they reached the large opening at that end of the room.

Severus had been somewhat surprised by the actions of the Quartet. Riddle had taken a protective stance next to and slightly in front of Potter while Malfoy and Zabini took up defensive poses just behind him. "Mr. Malfoy, Ms. Riddle, and Ms. Zabini, I only needed to speak with Mr. Potter," Severus said quietly to them.

Kira smiled, "That's alright Professor. Anything you need to speak with Harry about, I'm sure I can help explain, right bro?" Kira said the

last with a glance toward Harry. His nod in response sent a shiver down Severus' spine.

Severus nodded slightly and then said, "In that case you can hear me ask Mr. Potter to accompany me to the headmaster's office. Professor Dumbledore wishes to speak with him alone, so you three can go to your rooms and sleep. I expect you will want to wake up early to use the morning for exploring the castle." He then looked directly at Harry and gestured for the door, "If you would Mr. Potter?"

Harry nodded to his three friends and said, "Goodnight guys. I'll see you in the morning." The three all nodded while Kira gave him a supportive smile. He then turned and left through the portal.

Kira looked at Draco, "I need to go meditate on Harry. Goodnight Drake."

Blaise said, "Goodnight Draco, see you in the morning."

Draco replied, "Night ladies, I'll see you in the morning."

The three then went to their rooms. When Blaise and Kira entered the girls' dorm, Kira went to her bed and assumed a lotus position. Blaise went over to speak with Millicent and Pansy. Kira closed her eyes and sent her mind questing out to join with the mind she knew so well.

Harry followed his Head of House through the maze-like corridors. Even with his carefully trained memory the trip was hard to keep straight within his mind. They stopped before a rather ugly gargoyle statue. Severus mumbled, "snickers," and the gargoyle jumped aside to reveal a moving spiral staircase. Severus stepped onto one and Harry took one a few steps down. The staircase deposited them in a short hall ending in a mahogany door. Severus stalked to it and knocked twice in rapid succession.

"Come in," called the cheery voice of Albus Dumbledore.

As they entered Harry took note of everything in the room. It was a large circular office with numerous portraits, most awake currently.

The walls had shelves loaded with books and various magical items. One bookcase, behind and to the right of the headmaster's desk was locked with glass doors. Harry recognized a pensieve among the various books and silvery do-dads within the locked case. *Eclectic collection* Harry thought and felt the dark heiress agree within his mind. He carefully scanned the room and felt her memorizing its dangers along with him. *I wonder what the phoenix's name is.*

Harry finally brought his eyes to the desk. Albus Dumbledore was seated serenely behind the strong oaken desk, the sorting hat casually situated beside a bowl of yellow candies. Dumbledore wore a soft smile and allowed his eyes to twinkle in a disarming sort of way. Harry looked at the old man and wondered how this one person could cause so much difficulty for Voldemort. "You wished to see me sir?" Harry kept his voice soft and used the same silken inflections that he had heard Severus use earlier.

Behind Harry, Severus raised an eyebrow at the inflection within Harry's voice. He glared at the back of Harry's head and scowled slightly. He then looked up at the headmaster. Albus looked strangely false and Severus wondered at his perception.

"Yes, I did," said Albus with carefully crafted jovialness, "Please sit down." He gestured to the comfortable chair opposite him. Harry moved around the chair and took a seat. Albus smiled brighter and asked, "Would you care for a lemon drop?" He held up the bowl of candies toward Harry.

"No thank you, headmaster," his response was carefully concealed disdain, "I prefer Sour Balls over lemon drops. They aren't as falsely sweet as lemon drops." A soft giggle tickled his mind.

Albus continued to smile, but Severus recognized the subtle signs of annoyance in the headmaster's countenance. "Well Harry, in that case I will come straight to the heart of why I called you here. I need to know what you have been told about the wizarding world, and who you have been living with, also where you have been staying these past ten years. Can you shed any light for me?"

Harry smirked and almost laughed as her voice said *No but we can cast you into darkness*, within his mind. Harry looked directly into

those annoying tinkling eyes and said, "I know all about the wizarding world. I know about the ministry. I know you are considered a hero for your defeat of Grindelwald. I know some foolish reporters painted me as a hero when I was a baby for supposedly killing Voldemort. I know the events that happened on October 31, 1981 better than anyone other than Voldemort himself. Does that enlighten you sir?"

Albus' eyes narrowed while his smile remained plastered in place. Severus was surprised by Harry's assessment of his own celebrity status. Albus said, "Not entirely Harry you still haven't told me where or with whom you have been all these years."

"I have been with the Riddle family."

Albus' eyes widened while Severus' glanced at Harry with new sight. "You were raised by the Riddle family, with Miss Kira Riddle?"

Harry narrowed his eyes and said, "Is there another Riddle family?"

"So then you were raised by the mother of Kira Riddle?" Albus asked leadingly.

"Yes, but you are forgetting Father in your assessment."

"And who is father?"

"Tom Marvolo Riddle, of course," replied Harry flippantly. *Oh I think you ticked him off brother dear.*

"And what did Voldemort tell you about the night he orphaned you?" asked Albus in an oily smooth voice.

"He told me that he killed James and Lily Potter, but when he turned the spell on me it rebounded. He survived and retreated. While he was dwelling on what happened he came to the conclusion that it was best if he took me into his care to figure out what happened. That act got me removed from the magic hating muggle house that you left me in and for that I am grateful. His curiosity quickly gave way to affection and he came to love me as his son. Apparently I was irresistibly cute as a baby."

"Where is Voldemort? Where did you grow up?" Albus growled these questions quietly.

"I refuse to answer," replied Harry.

"If you do not answer me I will use Veritaserum to force the truth out of you."

Intense rage built within Harry before a voice within said, *Brother, repeat to him what I am about to tell you... Okay*, he responded. *Based on the underage wizard laws of 1813 he can not use Veritaserum on you without permission from your legal guardian. To do so without proper ministry jurisdiction, for criminal charges being leveled against the youth, is grounds for a sentence to Azkaban.* Harry met Albus' gaze and said in a deadly cold voice, "According to the Underage Wizard Laws of 1813 you can not do that without permission from my parents or legal guardian without special authorization from the ministry. If you dare so you earn yourself a trip to Azkaban. Now I am going to leave and get some sleep. Goodnight headmaster."

Albus rose to his feet as Harry stood and forcefully said, "YOU WILL ANSWER ME! Legilimens," Albus' eyes locked with Harry's as he said the spell. Severus was shocked by the headmaster's action. He had never known Albus to force his mind on another. He actually hoped Harry Potter had a way of defending himself.

Harry and Kira felt the invasive presence of Albus Dumbledore as it entered Harry's mind. Together they grabbed the presence and violently expelled it from his mind. They allowed their anger to fuel their actions and pain lanced through the surprised headmaster as he fell back into his chair in shock and agony.

The head master moaned in pain while Harry said, "You would do well to stay out of my mind, headmaster." He then turned and left. Severus followed Harry out. He did not want to be in the same room as a man who would assault the mind of a child at that moment. He silently escorted Harry back to the Slytherin common room.

Albus sat warily in his chair after Harry and Severus left. He was unaware of the clairvoyant presence still watching him as he looked

at the door. A chill crept upon him and he murmured, "I have to find Sirius Black. He'll give me permission to use the Veritaserum and maybe be able to talk some sense into that boy." He nodded to himself and began to write the letter to Sirius Black.

Back in the Slytherin girls' dorm Kira smirked. She withdrew her gaze from the aged headmaster. The year had barely begun and it was already becoming quite entertaining. She stretched from her lotus and nodded to Blaise before going to sleep.

CHAPTER 4

Beginnings are Delicate

(And easily shattered)

Morning arrived too quickly for some students, but for two of the newest serpents it appeared as they finished their morning exercises. The dark heirs bowed to one another in the predawn chill before slipping gracefully into their stances. They finished every form they knew as the first early risers entered the common room. They went to their separate bathing rooms to shower and ready themselves for the day.

Draco was waiting in the boys' dorm for Harry while Blaise waited for Kira in the girls' dorm. They had both been a part of the heirs' life long enough to know the morning routine. When all four were showered and dressed they met up in the common room. From there they headed up to the Great Hall for breakfast. Once seated, they were handed their schedules by another of the Slytherin prefects. There was a note attached to the schedules which stated that this first morning was open to first years so that they could locate their classrooms.

MONDAY / WEDNESDAY / FRIDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----History of Magic with Hufflepuff

8-9AM-----open

9-10AM-----Transfiguration with Ravenclaw

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----Potions with Gryffindor

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----Charms with Gryffindor

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

MONDAY ONLY: MIDNIGHT-2 AM----- Astronomy all houses

TUESDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts with Ravenclaw

8-9AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts with Ravenclaw

9-10AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts with Ravenclaw

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

THURSDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Breakfast/open

8-9AM-----Herbology with Ravenclaw

9-10AM-----Herbology with Ravenclaw

10-11AM-----Herbology with Ravenclaw

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

"We have Potions first thing today after lunch, followed by Charms,"
said Blaise

“Both of those are with the bloody Gryffindorks though,” complained Draco.

“It shouldn’t be too bad,” put in Kira

“Yeah, it’s not like we have to put up with them while we explore the castle today,” Harry added.

“And look on the bright side, those are the only two classes we have with them and Astronomy with everyone,” commented Blaise.

“So you’re saying that we only have to endure the stupidity of Gryffindorks without buffer students for two classes on three days a week and one of those classes is with our head of house; whom everyone knows favors us and hates Gryffindorks. Am I correct?” Draco summed up and asked.

“Yes,” all three answered.

“I can live with that,” finished up Draco and they ate their breakfast in silence.

The Slytherin quartet used the free morning for exploring, as that was why the first years had the morning free. The first years of the other houses also explored the castle, looking for classroom locations. The quartet used it to locate not only classrooms, but other places as well. They made sure they found Myrtle’s bathroom, the portrait with the fruit bowl, the hunchbacked one-eyed witch statue, library, infirmary, and headmaster’s office. The dark heirs were very specific on locating Myrtle’s haunted bathroom and when Draco asked why he was told it was a ‘secret’.

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After lunch the Serpentine Quartet were the first to arrive at the potions classroom in the dungeons. The dark heavy wooden door

was securely closed and locked. It wasn't warded, with anything dangerous, but there was a charm on it to tell Severus Snape if anyone entered it without his permission. Because of this the Quartet waited patiently outside the door for Professor Snape to arrive.

As they waited the other five Slytherins arrived followed shortly by the Gryffindors. The bushy haired muggle-born was the first to arrive. She seemed nervous and uncomfortable around the Slytherins but soon forgot about how they made her feel, because the red headed first year showed up with two other boys. Ronald Weasley interrupted the quiet conversation of the Quartet with a loud rude exclamation of, "Hey Potter!"

The other Slytherins stopped whispering as the Quartet turned as one and looked despairingly in the direction of Weasley. Harry glanced at Ronald with disdain as he replied, "Hay is for horses and morons with no manners. If you wish to speak with me, Weasley, then mind your manners."

Weasley's face darkened, causing his freckles to blend together in a dark flush of anger. He snapped in anger, "I have no reason to be polite to a scum sucking snake. How could you turn your back on the light?"

By this time all the Gryffindors had arrived and watched with curiosity the verbal match. "Who said I was?" asked Harry with soft contempt.

"You became a bloody snake! That makes you dark! Everyone knows that." Weasley sounded quite smug and proud of his logic.

"Not every Slytherin aspires to be the next Voldemort," said Kira. Everyone, except the Quartet, shivered at the Dark Lord's name.

Ron turned his angry gaze toward her and said, "Maybe not," very disbelievingly, "but I bet you're just itching to receive the Dark Mark," he finished by spitting the words at her.

"I will never bare the Dark Mark, Weasley," Kira replied flippantly.

"Nor will I," added Harry confidently. *After all father doesn't mark family.*

"You lying, bloody, good for nothing scum sucking snakes," Weasley yelled.

"Thirty points from Gryffindor for trying to start a fight Mister Weasley," interrupted Severus Snape silkily as he stalked through the students. He stopped before the door and pushed it open, "Now get in and stay silent," he commanded softly, yet everyone heard him.

The students filed in quietly. By unspoken agreement to house rivalries, the Gryffindors sat on the left side while the Slytherins sat on the right side of the class room. Every table allowed the students to pair up by being designed to sit two students. This arrangement left one Slytherin not paired up, Theodore Nott didn't seem to mind over much as he took a table for himself.

Severus looked over his class, paying particular attention to the spitting image of James Potter, except for Lily's eyes staring out of that face. Part of him wanted to beat his head against the black board, but instead he began to speak in his soft silken voice, "As there is little foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses ... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death - if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach." (direct quote)

He turned his attention to Ron Weasley and said softly, "Mr. Weasley what would you get if you added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"

Ron's face darkened slightly, "I don't know sir." Hermione Granger's hand quickly flew into the air.

"I see... well then mister Weasley lets try another one. Where would you look for a Bezoar and what is it used for?"

"I don't know sir," ground out Ron as embarrassment darkened his flush even more. Hermione's hand waved in the air.

“Well, I guess you must have felt you didn’t need to open a single book before coming to this class, could that be the case? I severely hope not. Tell me did you bother with any of your books because even if all you looked at was Herbology,” he softly sneered the word, “you will be able to tell me the difference between Monkshood and wolfsbane.”

“I don’t know the answer to your question. Why don’t you ask someone who does like Granger?” Ron snapped out at Severus, while Hermione took her hand out of the air with an incredulous look at Ron.

“Forty points from Gryffindor for back-talking a teacher,” Severus said in a frighteningly calm voice. He looked over the class and sneered, “Can anyone answer my questions or are you even denser then previous years?”

Hermione’s hand once again waved in the air. Surprisingly it was joined by two lazy hands, one from Kira the other from Harry. Severus looked at the two new serpents and said, “Ms. Riddle, can you answer the first question?”

She nodded, “Yes Professor. If the infusion of wormwood is pure, the resulting sleeping potion is so powerful it goes by the name Draught of Living Death. However, if the wormwood has impurities the result is a poison which kills by slow suffocation of the victim. There is no KNOWN cure for the resulting poison.”

A slight shiver passed through the Gryffindors at her knowledge of exactly what the poison did. Severus ignored the chill running down his spine, something in the way she said ‘known’ cure told him in his heart that the Dark Lord had come up with a cure. “Ten points to Slytherin for the correct answer. Mr. Potter, can you answer the second question?” Severus kept his voice low and even.

“Yes sir,” replied Harry calmly, “a Bezoar is a stone found in the stomach of a goat which is the primary ingredient in most antidote potions.”

“Correct Mr. Potter, ten points to Slytherin. As for my last inquiry, monkshood and wolfsbane are the same plant also known as

aconite.” He looked around the classroom and growled threateningly, “Why are you not copying this down?”

The class hurried to take notes. While they did that Severus opened his potion’s textbook and said, “Open your books to page 26. Then get to work on the shirking potion. The ingredients are in the back cabinets. You are to work with the person you are sitting beside.” He watched as the students began to set up their cauldrons.

Harry and Draco were paired up while Blaise and Kira were paired up of the Serpentine Quartet. The other Slytherins were paired Bulstrode and Parkinson, Crabbe and Goyle and of course Nott was by himself. The Gryffindor pairs were Granger and Abercrombie, Weasley and Thomas, Patil and Brown, and Longbottom and Finnigan. Severus stalked silently around the room, calmly watching and intimidating the students.

The potion was a simple shrinking potion with no volatile ingredients. It was literally the safest potion a person could brew unless you substituted beetle shells for dragonfly wings. That substitution caused the potion to explode rather violently and caused magical burns that took weeks to heal. Of course no one was stupid enough to add beetle shells to this potion... although Ron thought it’d be funny to have Neville do so. He handed Neville the shells when he asked the redheaded boy for the wings. Neville failed to notice the substitute as he said thanks and dropped the shells into his cauldron.

Kira had been observing the class and watched as Ron handed Neville the wrong ingredient. She hissed and waved her hand toward Neville and Seamus’ cauldron as the plump boy dropped the shells. The shells momentarily hovered above the cauldron before clinking to the counter around the simmering potion. Not one shell entered the bubbling brew. Severus heard the soft sounds and swooped down on Neville, “Mr. Longbottom, what is going on?” He noticed the beetle shells and scowled at the frightened Gryffindor.

“S...sorry Professor, I guess my hand wasn’t over the cauldron when I dropped them.” Neville squeaked. Seamus noticed they were not dragon wings and glared at Ron, knowing he had given his partner the wrong ingredient, but not willing to get his new friend in trouble.

“And why were you trying to add beetle shells when the potion clearly states to use dragonfly wings?” Severus’ voice was dangerously soft. Neville mumbled something incoherent. “Speak up Mr. Longbottom; I require an explanation I can hear.”

“I thought they were the wings because that’s what I asked Ron for and these were what he gave me.” His voice trembled; he knew that the Gryffindors would dislike him from that moment on because he had told on Ron.

“I see,” hissed Severus, “Ten points from Gryffindor, Mr. Weasley, for attempting to sabotage your fellow student’s potion. And next time Mr. Longbottom I suggest you retrieve the ingredients from the cupboard yourself. That way you won’t be sabotaged.”

The rest of the class was rather quiet and uneventful after that. Weasley kept giving Neville dirty looks whenever the professor’s back was to him. Severus continued to walk around the class room, praising Blaise, Draco, Harry, and Kira as well as correcting the other Slytherins. He only sneered at the Gryffindors who were making mistakes and murmured disparaging comments as he passed them.

At the end of class each pair bottled up a sample of their potion and labeled it. They handed in the samples. Seamus handed in his and Neville’s because Neville was petrified with fear and uncertainty. He also did only the clean up that kept him away from Ron. Finally the students began to file out, but Neville didn’t move because Ron, Dean, and Seamus were waiting outside the door. Kira took note of this and walked over to him.

Neville looked down shyly as Kira said, “Hello Neville, would you like to walk with us to charms?” He mumbled something and nodded slightly. “Good,” she grabbed his elbow and dragged him over to the rest of the Quartet. “Guys, this is Neville and he will be walking with us to charms.”

They nodded. “Neville,” Harry said as he extended his hand. Neville looked up, “I’m Harry, this is Draco and Blaise.”

Neville took Harry’s hand with some trepidation as he whispered, “Hello.”

"Lets go, or we may be late for Charms," said Blaise with a smile to take any sting out of her words. The five first year students quickly left the dungeons and headed to the Charms room. Harry and Draco took protective positions on either side of Neville as they passed the Gryffindork trio. Ron scowled as they passed but he, Seamus, and Dean followed silently.

Professor Flitwick was hardly an imposing individual. He stood on a dais behind a small podium as the students filed in. The room had two rows of seating against either wall. Each row easily seated five, so Kira made sure Neville sat with them. The other Slytherins sat behind the quartet. The Gryffindors sat in the rows across the room from them. Hermione Granger was slightly separated from the rest of her housemates by the careful seating arrangement the other three girls did.

The rather dwarfish professor quickly took roll call and was somewhat startled by the seating of Neville Longbottom. He proceeded to take the class through a simple series of wand movements, the swish and flick which was crucial to many charms. By the end of class Slytherin had received twenty points while Gryffindor only received five. Each of the five students who perfected the wand movement by the end of class received five points each; they were Granger, Malfoy, Potter, Riddle and Zabini.

After class the Slytherin quartet headed to the library, there were a few books they wanted to get. They arrived to dinner slightly later than the rest of their house and noticed the alienation the Gryffindor house was giving Longbottom and Granger. *Just like Brandon and Lenora back home*, thought Harry to Kira. She sent her silent, somewhat sad agreement. They sat at the Slytherin table and started eating. They retreated to the common room after that for a short time to do the homework Professor Snape had assigned, explain why beetle shells are not an ingredient in the shrinking potion they had done that day. They went to bed shortly after that.

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Albus Dumbledore, Severus Snape, and Filius Flitwick sat in the headmaster's office shortly after dinner that evening. "Thank you for coming," Albus said with a smile, "I would like to ask you about how Mr. Potter's and Ms. Riddle's first day went. Filius, why don't you tell me how classes were this afternoon?"

"Of course," said the short man in a surprisingly deep voice, "They came in the class with Mr. Malfoy, Ms. Zabini, and Mr. Longbottom. All five sat in the same row and except for Mr. Longbottom they earned points for their house by showing exceptional aptitude in wand movement. Mr. Potter and Ms. Riddle seemed very well practiced."

"Mr. Longbottom was with them?" asked Albus.

"Yes, they walked in with him between Mr. Malfoy and Mr. Potter. Ms. Riddle was the one who convinced him to sit with them, though."

"I see, well thank you Filius, and what of potions class? How were they in your class Severus?" transitioned Albus.

"They were able to answer my impossibly beginning of the year questions," huffed Severus as he gave a 'look' at Filius out of the corner of his eye. Albus had known Severus long enough to understand he had something more to say in private.

Albus chuckled, "Anything else?"

"Not that I can think of," replied Severus as he blinked slowly to indicate he would explain later.

"Well in that case, I bid you all a good night," Albus said cheerfully.

The two professors stood up and as Severus opened the door, Albus said, "If you could stay another moment, Severus my boy?"

"Of course Albus," replied Severus as he nodded to Filius while murmured a goodnight. Severus closed the door behind him. He moved back to his seat across from Albus.

"What did you wish to add?"

"During class Mr. Weasley attempted to sabotage Mr. Longbottom's potion. Also before class he was harassing Mr. Potter and attempting to cause a fight. After class Ms. Riddle was very kind to Mr. Longbottom and he walked with them to Charms. Her behavior is somewhat confusing, as the Dark Lord's daughter she must surely know which families have been his biggest opponents. I would not have thought she would give any thought toward a child of a light family, unless it was contempt. Mr. Weasley's treatment of her and Mr. Potter may hinder your plan to redeem the lad."

"Is that all?" asked Albus.

"Not entirely... when Mr. Longbottom attempted to add the improper ingredients something stopped them from entering the cauldron. I don't know how but each beetle shell landed outside the cauldron. Even one would have caused an explosion which would have landed Mr. Longbottom and Mr. Finnigan in the Hospital wing for a few weeks."

"So someone saw what was happening and saved him?"

"I don't see how. Unless he performed accidental magic, which I don't think, there wasn't any discernable magic used. No one had their wand out or even within reach when this happened."

"I see... well keep an eye on them and keep me informed of any other unusual circumstances."

"Of course, goodnight Albus," replied Severus.

"Goodnight Severus."

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

MONDAY ONLY: MIDNIGHT-2AM--- ASTRONOMY ALL HOUSES

TUESDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Breakfast/open

8-9AM-----Herbology with Hufflepuff

9-10AM-----Herbology with Hufflepuff

10-11AM-----Herbology with Hufflepuff

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

THURSDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Hufflepuff

8-9AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Hufflepuff

9-10AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Hufflepuff

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

HUFFLEPUFF

MONDAY / WEDNESDAY / FRIDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----History of Magic with Slytherin

8-9AM-----open

9-10AM-----open

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Transfiguration with Gryffindor

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----Charms with Ravenclaw

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----Potions with Ravenclaw

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

MONDAY ONLY: MIDNIGHT-2AM--- ASTRONOMY ALL HOUSES

TUESDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Breakfast/open

8-9AM-----Herbology with Gryffindor

9-10AM-----Herbology with Gryffindor

10-11AM-----Herbology with Gryffindor

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

THURSDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Gryffindor 8-9AM----
-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Gryffindor

9-10AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Gryffindor

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

RAVENCLAW

MONDAY / WEDNESDAY / FRIDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Breakfast/open

8-9AM-----open

9-10AM-----Transfiguration with Slytherin

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----Charms with Hufflepuff

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----Potions with Ravenclaw

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

MONDAY ONLY: MIDNIGHT-2AM--- ASTRONOMY ALL HOUSES

TUESDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Slytherin

8-9AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Slytherin

9-10AM-----Defense Against the Dark Arts w/Slytherin

10-11AM-----Lunch/open

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

THURSDAY

5-6AM-----Breakfast/open

6-7AM-----Breakfast/open

7-8AM-----Breakfast/open

8-9AM-----Herbology with Slytherin

9-10AM-----Herbology with Slytherin

10-11AM-----Herbology with Slytherin

11-NOON-----Lunch/open

NOON-1PM-----Lunch/open

1-2PM-----open

2-3PM-----open

3-4PM-----open

4-5PM-----open

5-6PM-----Dinner/open

6-7PM-----Dinner/open

7-8PM-----Dinner/open

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AN

I hope to update this once a week, but I don't know if I can type it that fast... I also have Of Magic which is a light Harry Potter Fic spanning years six and seven w/ OoTP spoilers. Thank you for partaking of my twisted little worlds.

Review Responses

Jadzania: Thank you. The plot is more convoluted then it seems on the surface and I really hope I can bring it all together with timely updates

Kage Mirai Thank you. Here's more. I believe darkness is simply the shade of life that gets a bad rap... not truly evil... this is most definitely a dark Slytherin Harry... evil... well who knows

SREndrews Thank you... Here's an update. Hope you enjoyed.

kamui5 This Harry is no push over for Albus to manipulate. As for Sirius Black... well I have these evil plans...

SREndrews Thank you soooo much... yeah yippy I'm on a favorites list... Here's an update, hope you enjoyed.

Sword and Magic: I have a tendency to create absolutely evil plot bunnies... this was one and its much more twisted then it seems... - I will post as often as I can, once a week is my current goal.

Roeschen: Thank you, I will.

evilharry=goodness: Thank you very much. Here is an update and thanks for being my first reviewer!!

CHAPTER 5

SERPENT'S CHOICE

During the next week routine set in among all the students. The serpentine quartet went to all their classes together. After the initial overtures to Neville, he became a companion for the walk and free hour before charms. The quartet talked Theodore Nott into partnering with Blaise in potions while Kira made herself Neville's partner by that Friday. The Gryffindors shifted their partnering because of this; Hermione Granger had to work alone in potions.

Kira apologized to her after class Friday and invited her to accompany them before charms. Hermione agreed and after that became as much a companion as Neville. The betrayal of the two lions caused the rest of their house to alienate them further. Hermione and Neville proved their Gryffindor bravery by ignoring the sneers of their house mates; they proved their loyalty by sticking together. Routine made the weeks pass quietly.

The last Saturday in September found the quartet entering Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. The ghost girl glared at the two boys and said, "This is a girls' bathroom! What are you doing here?"

Kira looked at her and said, "We are here to head down to the Chamber of Secrets. That must remain unknown to everyone else." **I bind your soul now and forevermore. You will speak of the chamber and us nevermore.**

The magic flowed within Kira's hisses. Myrtle felt something binding her and screeched, "You're mean!" She then plunged head first into 'her' toilet. Water flooded onto the floor.

Harry shook his head and glanced at the sinks. The small serpent carving caught his eye and he said, "Here it is, sis. Now what did father say makes the stairs appear rather than the hole?"

Kira smirked and hissed **Stairway open for the heir.**

The wall next to the sink slid open to reveal a narrow staircase leading deep under the castle. Harry put his foot on the first step and

the walls began to glow a soft blue-white. Draco and Blaise followed behind him as he began to descend. Kira stepped down last and hissed **Close** as she followed. The wall slid back into place and the parsel-wards rose back around the entrance. Kira smiled at the feel of Slytherin's ancient magic.

The stairs continued down into the depths of the castle's foundation. The quartet could feel when they had moved beneath the dungeons because the air became cooler. The walls beside the stairway opened periodically to reveal the tunnels leading into the plumbing of the castle. After descending quite some distance, Harry stopped before the door directly into the Chamber.

The blue-white light from the walls illuminated silver, gold, green and red snake carvings which formed an archway with their interlinking bodies. The hundreds of small snakes were woven over a single slab of pitch black marble. Above the doorway were some scribbled markings which made no sense to non Parselmouths. It read **Meet the eyes of the Serpent and Know your self. Proclaim your Right and Enter.**

Harry studied the serpents and finally saw the one he sought. The snake was almost in the exact center. It was half a meter of golden-green, emerald-green, silver-blue, and sapphire-blue bands, each barely a quarter centimeter thick. Its head was crested, somewhat like a cobra, with a crimson outline. Its eyes were golden-yellow with a molten quality which was unnerving in its intensity. Harry met its eyes unflinchingly with his own and hissed **Unlock and open.**

The serpent's eyes blinked and small crimson pupils appeared in the molten gold. It stared deeply into Harry's emerald eyes as if weighing his worthiness. It hissed **Enter** and then began to move toward the top of the archway. The other snakes all began to migrate to the edge of the black marble so that they formed a glistening slithering outline for the door. The surface of the entrance rippled slightly and Harry stepped through.

The other three followed. Kira smiled at the lead snake and hissed **Hello** before entering. The Chamber was huge. The single room was at least half the size of the great hall. It was semi-divided by what it

contained and the material on the floor. They entered through the south wall; to the left was a mini library in disrepair, to the right was a potions work area caked in grime behind which four doors hung from rusted hinges, directly across the large room was a vault-like door rusted shut beside which a grime covered portrait hung. The very center of the room had a large pit filled with black gunk and surrounded by broken furniture.

Kira whispered to Draco and Blaise, "Stay by the entrance." *Brother lets attempt the bonding.*

Harry stepped with his sister. They moved to the pit, two meters in diameter, and stood to either side of it. Harry was to the east and Kira to the west of the pit. They held their hands toward one another, palms out. Together they hissed **We are the heirs of legacy. We are the heirs of Slytherin and Gryffindor. We call on the legacy and the right of our blood to fully restore the Chamber of Knowledge and Power. We ask that the secrets of our blood be imparted to us.** The chamber was engulfed in light.

Draco and Blaise cowered against the entrance and covered their eyes. The light burned brilliant white before cycling through every color in the spectrum. While the light dazzled hissing could be heard. It sounded like hundreds or thousands of snakes and Parselmouths were conversing. The radiant display vanished and was replaced by soft ambient silvery light which was being cast by the mage flame now dancing in the central pit.

Four incredibly large couches surrounded the fire-pit. The fire-pit itself was encased by a white marble ring which was half a meter wide and a not quite a meter high. The four couches were situated back from the pit, all facing inward. They each could have easily held three men the size of Hagrid. The first couch, to the north, was of a deep forest green hemmed and embroidered with luminescent silver thread. The second couch, to the east, was a dusky black with creamy yellow embroidery and hem work. The third couch, to the west, was dark blue with bronze embroidery and hemming. The last couch, to the south, was a deep crimson with golden hems and embroidery. Behind each couch was a mahogany table whose surface was even with the height of the couch.

The library section was restored to a glory equal to the private libraries of many pure-bloods. In addition to the wall shelves repairing themselves and the books being restored to them there were also thirteen new free standing bookshelves. The wall shelves, which stretched up to the ceiling, also gained a sliding ladder for easy access to the upper shelves. The free standing shelves were less than two meters high, but they were each three meters long.

The potion area had also become immaculately neat and clean. The equipment was well organized and the shelves filled with empty vials and jars. There were potion books sitting on the work table. The ingredient shelves stood empty and waiting. The doorways next to this area had all become repaired. Each door proudly bore one of the Hogwarts houses' crest. Each crest was slightly different from the current one, but the differences were minor. Next to each fully restored door was a plaque of silver or gold with the same scrawled parsel-language writing.

The northern side of the room had changes slightly as well. The vault-like door was now a beautiful shade of shimmering bronze while the silver serpents encircling it looked alive. The portrait revealed itself to be Salazar Slytherin and beside it a second portrait appeared. The second framed form was of a beautiful auburn haired hazel eyed woman. She was smiling at Salazar with intense love. The northwest corner also had a unique eight pointed star within a circle appear inlaid in the floor.

The entire floor was of different marble colors depending on location. The center was a circular slab of black marble no less than thirty meters in diameter. The marble was cut with straight white veins to form a perfect compass rose, using the fire-pit as the exact center. The white extended from the black into the other colored marble floor pieces. The north floor was a vivid emerald green marble. The east floor was a light yellow veined gray marble. The south floor was a dark reddish gold marble. The west was ocean blue marble.

Kira and Harry smirked at Draco and Blaise from either side of the mage flame. Harry said, "Help me check out the books while sis goes to speak with the basilisk."

"Sure," replied the other two students.

Kira nodded at Harry and then headed toward the large vault-like door. Kira bowed to Salazar and his wife. She then walked over to the door and hissed **open** to the snakes. The door opened and she entered the catacombs under the grounds and Lake of Hogwarts. The quartet now had a private place to meet. They decided to call the Chamber of Secrets simply their 'clubhouse'.

The quartet spent quite a bit of their free time during the next week in the clubhouse. Kira and Harry both read through some of the Parseltounge books. The quartet used it as a quite place to study and practice magic. The dark heirs introduced Blaise and Draco to the Basilisk. Vorla met them and learned the scents of the two students she was to protect within the school. The ancient serpent was very happy to begin fulfilling her purpose again.

Monday October twelfth saw the flying lesson schedules being handed out, Slytherin and Gryffindor were Friday 7-9 am. As Slytherins and Gryffindors alike grumbled about the unfairness of another class together, the morning post arrived. Kira nodded her friends toward the Gryffindor table. Neville Longbottom had received a small crystalline sphere a little larger than a golf ball.

A muggle born boy asked, "What's that?"

"A Remembrall from my grandmother," replied Neville.

Before he could say or do anything else, Ron Weasley snatched it out of his hand. He taunted, "What's this? A new trinket for you to lose or break, maybe a real wizard should hold it for you."

"Give that back to him," commanded Hermione.

"Make me, snake wanna-be," responded Ron with a sneer.

Hermione squared her shoulders and purposefully strode toward the head table. Ron glared at her back with a look that could kill. He then threw the ball with all his might over Neville's head. "Catch," he taunted as it sailed over the boy's startled countenance. Hermione whirled in time to see it fly at an incredible speed straight for the

Slytherin table. Harry snatched it out of the air milliseconds before it would have smashed into the corner.

The boy-who-lived-to-become-a-snake walked around the Ravenclaw table and over to Neville. "Here, Neville," he said loudly, "You might want to keep a closer eye on your things and not let weasels borrow them. Vermin have a tendency to destroy beautiful things." He handed the small Remembrall to Neville.

"Thank you, Harry," Neville said as Hermione smiled her thanks from beside the chubby boy. Harry nodded and headed back to the Slytherin table. His comments had caught the attention of the rest of the Gryffindors as well as Minerva McGonagall. The severe lady pressed her lips together in disapproval for the youngest Weasley boy. Percy and the twins had also heard the comment about vermin and bristled slightly themselves.

Harry approached the Slytherin table and noticed his sister had her hand pointed at the Gryffindor table palm out. She was staring intensely at Ron Weasley. **Itsy bitsy red and gold dot bikini, hot pink in a wink hair affair so is your fate on this date.** Harry felt the power she put into the parsel-spell. He sat down.

The great hall burst into laughter. Ron Weasley's robe had become a tiny red with gold polka-dot female bikini. His hair had become hot pink. The Slytherins laughed with everyone else as Ron ran from the great hall in shame. Neville and Hermione looked around trying to figure out who did it. The Weasley twins glanced around; they had competition. Percy stood up with dignity and walked out; the twins followed. The three brothers went in search for their git of a younger brother.

After that eventful breakfast, Ron Weasley had to walk around with hot pink hair. He also was unable to take off the bikini and change. He was however able to wear an additional robe over the bikini. He threatened Kira and Harry because he "knew" they had pranked him. Professor Snape heard the threat and took twenty points from Gryffindor for it. Classes continued as usual the rest of the day. Ron woke up in normal robes and with normal hair the next morning.

Friday morning found the first year Gryffindors and Slytherins out on the quidditch pitch. Seventh year Slytherin Marcus Flint was also present, having permission to watch the lesson. Madame Hooch arrived and told them to stand beside a broom. She told them that anyone goofing off would be punished severely.

Once everyone was beside a broom they were told to hold their hand over the broom and say "up". The Slytherin quartet were the only ones to succeed on the first try. Hermione's and Neville's just rolled on the ground. Ron Weasley got his to respond on the third try. Harry leaned toward Neville and Hermione and whispered, "Just relax, the broom responds to your nervousness and fear."

Once everyone managed to summon their brooms into their hands, Madame Hooch had them mount. She corrected grips and then told them to kick off on her whistle. Neville's fear caused him to kick off early. He rose unsteadily into the air about ten meters while Madame Hooch yelled at him to come down. As he tried to point the handle down the broom seemed to go crazy. It shot around the yard slamming into the stands and stone walls a few times.

The broom finally dumped Neville off at a height of about twenty meters up. Hermione screamed, "Neville!" in fear for him. Harry darted forward on his broom. Kira hissed with both hands facing him **light as air hang right there**. The second it took for that to happen Neville had fallen almost four meters. Suddenly he stopped falling and was suspended in the air.

Harry reached him two seconds later, "Here, get on behind me," he said as he held out his hand. The frightened boy allowed himself to be settled on the broom behind Harry. He gripped Harry tightly around the middle. Harry felt the parsel-spell release from around the other boy as they descended to the ground. Neville and Harry dismounted from the broom.

"MR. POTTER!" began Madame Hooch.

"Kira!" screamed Harry as he darted past the irate teacher. Draco and Blaise caught Kira as she fainted. All eyes turned toward the quartet as Harry screamed his sister's name. Draco and Blaise gently lowered Kira to the ground as Harry reached them.

"What happened?" asked Draco.

"She just collapsed," defended Blaise when Harry knelt beside them.

"She exhausted herself magically by holding Neville up there," Harry answered as he took Kira's hand in his own. "Sister, can you hear me?"

Yes she opened her eyes slightly

"Good, how much of your reserves did you use?" The students were moving closer, looking at the scene curiously. Madame Hooch stood still in confusion and minor fear, she had heard Riddle hiss.

Most

"Did it cause a trigger event?" Hearing Harry's question, Blaise and Draco stiffened. A trigger event was a shifting in the magic the dark heirs could access. It was very painful and without the proper treatment very dangerous for the heirs, that was why they were normally induced under controlled conditions. Draco and Blaise prayed that this had not become a trigger event.

Yes Kira closed her eyes. Blaise and Draco recognized the signs and prepared for what was next. Harry tightened his grip on her shoulder as her body stiffened. He felt the painful energy rip through her. A scream of agony was torn from her lips as her back arched, nearly invisible purple lightening danced over her skin. The scream caused everyone to back off. Cold seeped into the students around her, it was as if their warmth was being sucked away.

"Mr. Potter let me take her," commanded Madame Hooch as her fear turned into dread.

"No!" Harry snarled at her. "Draco, Blaise keep everyone away from her while I fetch what she needs to get through this. Comfort her as best you can." They nodded and Draco took Harry's place beside her, holding her as her body spasmed with pain again.

As Harry stood, Lavender from Gryffindor screamed. Everyone looked where she was pointing. A chill reached through those who

hadn't already been touched by it. The students felt as if their happiness was being sucked away. The figure Lavender was pointing at was a black cloaked form floating down at them. "Stay back children," said Madame Hooch as she took out her wand.

"Stay out of this Madame Hooch," commanded Harry as he walked over to the newly landed Dementor. Everyone stood with baited breath as Harry approached the dark creature guardian of Azkaban. The Dementor bowed slightly to Harry and a rasping sound escaped its hood. Harry nodded and said, "Thank you." He turned and walked back to where Kira lay. The Dementor followed.

Blaise and Draco moved away from Kira as Harry and the Dementor stopped beside her prone form. Kira hissed **help me** and cried out again as her back arched. The scream was much quieter this time. Harry said, "Help is here."

The Dementor knelt down beside Kira and gently cradled her in its arms. A scabbed, dead looking hand was extended toward Harry who murmured an incision spell. Dark purple blood welled up in the wound. The Dementor then set its wrist to Kira's lips. It became apparent to everyone that she was drinking the creature's foul blood.

Her eyes opened. She licked the wound and hissed **heal**. The Dementor removed its wrist from her lips as the skin patched itself back together. She threw her arms around the dark creature and hugged it tightly. "Thank you," she whispered to it. The Dementor rasped quietly as it stood and gently set Kira on her feet. She nodded and smiled as it let go of her. It then bowed low to her before floating into the air and gliding away. The unnatural chill was gone, but everyone would require chocolate.

"Are you okay now?" asked Harry as he stepped up to his sister.

"Mostly, I still need the threshold potions though. The new energy hasn't stabilized yet," Kira answered.

"In that case, Drake, Blaise let's get my sister back to the dorms," Harry said.

The two friends moved over and together the quartet headed inside, ignoring everyone. Fear and disgust were etched in the faces of every Gryffindor student. Madame Hooch released the class and went to find the headmaster.

As the Slytherins moved off Neville approached Millicent Bulstrode, "Excuse me, but could you please tell Kira and Harry thank you for me?" Bulstrode nodded and then left with Parkinson. Hermione joined Neville and they headed back to Gryffindor tower. Ron Weasley and his two cronies... ah friends went off to spread rumors about what happened. Marcus Flint went in search of Professor Severus Snape.

Review responses/answers (reviewer name/question in **bold**)

Kage Mirai: Thank you. I'm glad you understand where I'm coming from in regards to "dark"

SRAndrews: -smiles sheepishly- silly me I just paste review names and respond to the comment w/out always noticing it's the same person as an earlier comment, but thank you soooo much for both reviews(and this one of course and all future ones... okay I'll stop blabbing)

Jadzania: Thank you... I can't wait to reveal the twists myself... (smiles evilly)

Shadowface: This Harry will most definitely be dark and Slytherin... but I am not going to promise evil... though I do guarantee he is not going to ever be the golden boy light hero of cannon story-line

Miss Lesley: Thank you and now to answer some of your questions.

Question:

1) Since James and Lily died on schedule why is Sirius not in jail?

Sirius was able to prove his innocence... it was mentioned in the articles in chapter one that not everyone believed his innocence... but he was released after the trial

2) Why did Harry not end up with Sirius since he is obviously his guardian?

Sirius was in jail at the time he was kidnapped... everyone (meaning Dumbledore) thought he was guilty and placed Harry with the Dursleys... and before you ask, yes Sirius is his legal guardian in the wizarding world... which is why Dumbledore needs to reach him

3) What is the dark lord's position on muggleborns?

You'll see (smiles evilly)

4) Did Severus know the dark lord was alive, or did he learn with the headmaster?

Severus and Dumbledore both kind of knew Voldemort was still alive... because...um well I can't tell you yet.

5) Why did the Dark Lord stop the killing after Harry?

For one he was too weak... and two ... you'll see.

6) Dumbledork an ass, if he knew where Voldie was what would he do, but go get killed.

Get killed... yeah that's what he'd do. No wait that's not right... oh what was he going to do... oh yeah he was going to use Kira as a hostage and attempt to ambush Voldemort... yeah that was Dumbledork's master plan.

7) After seeing what Dumbledork did to Harry, why is Severus still loyal?

Severus' loyalty to Dumbledore is very complicated... it's not like in cannon because... well that will be revealed.

Comment, looking over their classes I would think that if they were up until 2AM (if you could get 11 years up that late) then on Tuesdays their classes would start later seeing as 4 -5 hours would make them tired and since DADA is important that would not be good

The first year classes the next morning are Herbology and DADA... the first will keep them busy(planting, pruning, whatever) and the other is taught by a stuttering fool... also when I figured out each of the teacher's class schedules(for all seven years) this was the only place the first years fit for astronomy without causing upper years to suffer... first year is foundational but its also the least stressful, plus they have more time for naps in the afternoon than the other years.

I hope that answers your questions and thanks again for the reviews.

CHAPTER 6

QUESTIONS?

Albus Dumbledore helped the shaking Madame Hooch to sit down in his office. He handed her tea, gently laced with calming potion, as she tried to get her bearings. After a few sips she visibly relaxed. Albus left her sitting, with the tea clutched tightly, as he sat back in his desk chair.

"Now Henrietta please tell me what caused you such distress," Albus commanded softly.

"It was Riddle and Potter..." she paused biting her lip.

"What happened?" asked Albus with comfort and kindness.

Henrietta Hooch took a deep breath and a sip of tea before she spoke. "Mr. Longbottom made a classic first year mistake by kicking off early and promptly losing control of his broom. When the broom knocked him off everything became strange. He was suspended in the air while Mr. Potter flew up and rescued him. Mr. Potter brought Mr. Longbottom to the ground and as I was about to chastise him he screamed Ms. Riddle's name. He ran to her as Mr. Malfoy and Ms. Zabini caught her. At first I thought she'd simply fainted. He started asking questions and she hissed the answers. I may have been too far away, but it didn't sound like English, it sounded like Parseltounge. She screamed and I tried to take control, only to have Mr. Potter tell me to butt out. That was when the Dementor arrived. Ms. Riddle drank its blood and then hugged the vile thing! How could she?! What the hell is going on Albus?!

"I don't know... I only ask that you keep what you saw to yourself until after I question Ms. Riddle."

She nodded, finished her tea, and then left. Albus stood and went in search of Severus Snape.

[illegible]

In professor Snape's office Marcus Flint smirked victoriously, "Thank you Professor Snape, I guarantee you will not be disappointed."

"You had better be certain and we had better win. I've become used to holding the House Cup," replied Severus.

"Yes Sir," Marcus stood and gave a respectful nod before striding back into the maze of corridors known as the dungeons.

Severus rubbed his temples after Mr. Flint left. He couldn't believe he was going to allow a first year onto the quidditch team, but Marcus said Potter was a natural. The seventh year was certain Potter would make an excellent seeker and give Slytherin far greater leads than Higgs ever could. A knock interrupted his musings and before he responded it opened to reveal a smiling Albus Dumbledore. Severus scowled at the old headmaster and said, "Just the wizard I wanted to see."

"Really, and why is that my boy?" asked Albus entirely too cheerfully.

"Marcus Flint, the captain of the Slytherin quidditch team, asked me to allow a first year to try out for the reserve seeker position. I agreed to ask you for special permission for the student to have his own broom in spite of the rule against first years having their own brooms."

Albus raised an eyebrow, "And who is he suggesting?" "Mr. Potter," the name was said with loathing, remembered hatred for the father leaking through his mask.

Albus beamed brightly at the sour potions master, "Well, Mr. Potter did save a fellow student today, so I will grant special permission for him to have his own broom."

"I was not aware that he saved anyone, who did he help?"

"Mr. Longbottom," replied Albus and was rewarded by a scowl of disapproval from Severus. "But I had another reason for coming to see you," continued the headmaster, "I need you to escort Ms. Riddle to my office after dinner. If Mr. Potter insists he may come as well."

"Why do you need to see Ms. Riddle?"

"Something unusual happened out on the pitch this morning and I need to ask her a few questions."

"I see... will I be allowed to stay during the questioning?" He felt his protectiveness toward his Slytherins rise within him.

"Of course, as her head of house you need to know what is happening in her life."

"Then I will see you at dinner and escort Ms. Riddle to your office afterward."

"Thank you," Albus stood then and left Severus' office.

[illegible]

Harry sat beside Kira in the Slytherin common room. Draco and Blaise had used the map to get lunch from the kitchens and the quartet ate their food peacefully. At the moment Draco and Blaise rested against the couch reading quietly while Harry and Kira spoke with their mother using a small mirror and their telepathy. Bulstrode had told Kira and Harry that Neville had said thanks. They thanked her for relaying the message and told her to let the rest of the house know that the Dark Heiress needed their support in the coming days.

The information spread like wild fire throughout the serpent house. The quartet was mostly left in peace while they relaxed before potions. At 1:30 Blaise helped Kira to the girls' dorm so she could nap the afternoon away. Then the rest of the quartet headed out to potions class.

Blaise, Draco, and Harry arrived outside the classroom and immediately were taunted by Weasley. "What kind of monsters consort with Dementors?"

Harry simply looked at Ron as the other Gryffindors shifted uneasily. "If your pea-brain can't figure it out I'm not going to enlighten you."

Weasley's face burned with anger and as he moved to retaliate Professor Snape silkily said, "Fifteen points, Mr. Weasley for attempting to start a fight. Now everyone get inside." Ron flushed with embarrassment and shuffled in with the rest of the class. Hermione paired up with Neville in the heart of snake territory, since Kira wasn't there.

Professor Snape noticed a missing serpent. "Where is Ms. Riddle?" he asked delicately while meeting Harry's emerald green eyes. *He has her eyes.*

"She's not feeling well, sir," replied Harry. Severus nodded and began class. He told Harry to stay after class for a few minutes once class had begun working on the potion. Mr. Longbottom once again managed to not blow up his cauldron; apparently Ms. Granger was as good at keeping his natural clumsiness in line as Ms. Riddle was. Seamus Finnigan however melted his and Alice Abercrombie's cauldron. Severus used that as an opportunity to remove twenty more points and issued detentions with Filch.

As the class filed out Harry walked up to Professor Snape's desk, "Professor?"

"Yes... Mr. Potter I have two things to tell you. First, please inform Ms. Riddle that I will be escorting her to Professor Dumbledore's office after dinner." Harry pursed his lips in response but nodded. "Second, you are to report to the Quidditch pitch Sunday at two for team tryouts. That is all, dismissed." He then ignored the first year as Harry left.

Harry joined Blaise and Draco outside the classroom. He saw Hermione and Neville standing nearby and smirked at them. They smiled tentatively back and walked over to the quartet. "What did Professor Snape want?" asked Hermione.

"He told me Dumbledore wants to see Kira after dinner and that I am to try out for the quidditch team."

"That's fantastic," said Draco. As Harry glanced at him, he continued, "The quidditch team tryout not the stuff about Dumbledork and Kira."

Harry nodded, "I know, and I hope I do make the team."

Neville said, "I'm sure you will. And thank you again for what you did earlier."

Harry gave a real smile and said, "Don't worry about it; that is what friends do for one another. Now why don't we go somewhere and review for charms." The other four students agreed and went to the library until shortly before charms class. Harry told Professor Flitwick that Kira was ill as they entered the classroom. Hermione joined the Slytherin side of the room as per usual class period.

The three Serpents headed back to their common room after charms. Harry telepathically warned Kira of what Albus wanted. Blaise went to the girls' dorm to help Kira out to the common room. When she entered Harry noticed her paleness and weak magical aura. He could tell that the potions they had did not stabilize her completely. She would need fresher threshold potions to recover completely.

Kira was dressed in her darkest ebony hooded cloak and wearing a silver pendant. She walked with inner strength and dignity. The light glinted off of the sapphire eyes of her pendant. When Harry saw the pendant he ran to the boys' dorm to fetch his match of the pendant. Blaise and Draco noticed the gifts the heirs had received from Voldemort this past July. The two pendants were identical except for material and eye gemstones. They were skulls, each with a dagger through the top running down through the jaw, a cobra coiled around the dagger so that its body was visible through the open mouth and its tail curving away from the dagger. Harry's pendant was goblin white-gold with emerald eyes; Kira's was elven silver with sapphire eyes.

Blaise and Draco knew that the heirs felt threatened because the pendants were enchanted with every protection spell known and a few parsel-protection spells that weren't known. The quartet headed up to the Great Hall for dinner after Harry put his pendant on and tucked it inside his robe. The whispers started as they entered. Three tables were alive with voices and pointing fingers. The Slytherin table simply scowled at the other three tables and made room for the quartet in the center to show their support of the heirs.

The youngest Weasley yelled out, "Hey, I thought we didn't allow Demented monsters inside Hogwarts." Mutters of agreement and Ron's smirk at his own cleverness were the responses to his inane comment.

"Shut up Weasel!" was Neville Longbottom's angered response. There were a few gasps of surprise; no Gryffindor had ever called a Weasley weasel before. He stood up, as did Hermione, and walked over to the quartet as they sat at the Slytherin table. The rest of the serpents moved enough for both lions to sit if they chose. Neville stood next to Kira as Hermione sat down next to the dark heiress. "I'm sure Harry told you, but I wanted to say it in person, thank you Kira, for whatever you did to save me earlier."

Kira smiled with her eyes as a small curve graced her pale lips. "You're welcome Neville."

Neville blushed, "thanks, and I'm sorry."

"For what?" asked Kira. The hall had quieted so that the entire Hall could hear them.

"For how everyone is reacting," he replied.

A smirk moved to dominate her lips as she said, "You have no control over the other students. Their own narrow minded stupidity is not your fault."

Neville shook his head, "But if you hadn't helped me..."

"Don't!" she commanded with a voice the broached no alternative but to comply. "Do not say I should not have helped you. Even knowing the consequences, I would exhaust my magic to protect you again."

"Why?" Neville asked in a small voice. The entire hall would hear her response. The teachers were paying particular attention to the conversation without seeming to.

Kira knew everyone would hear her answer. She decided to answer truthfully and let the Hall try to figure out what she left out. ***/The brown pigtails were in disarray as the seven year old girl threw***

herself on Kira. Her sweet hazel eyes looked up with tears as she cried, "I know you can help him. Jack's gang is beating him. Please." The girl, younger by three years sobbed./ Kira pushed the memory aside and answered, "You remind me of Brandon. I failed to protect him; I refuse to fail in protecting another with such a pure soul."

Harry sent his understanding and love to Kira. ***/Her long ebony hair hid her face. He could hear her sobs. He couldn't remember ever hearing this type of heart wrenching sobs from her before. She was holding another girl, Lenora, whose brown hair was loose from her pigtails. The other girl was crying too. He only held in his tears because he knew he had to be the strong one. The coroner was bagging the body of their dear friend. A boy whose only crime was standing up to the local teen gang and protecting his little sister, Brandon was dead./***

The Hall was so silent that it was a tangible presence. Neville blushed brighter and quickly sat down beside Hermione so that the bushy haired witch was between him and Kira. That seemed to be the signal and everyone began to eat. Harry met Kira's eyes and sent to her *I see what you see in him. He is just like Brandon and I will help you protect him. This time there will be no revenge because no one will harm him.*

Kira nodded to him *Thanks.* ***/Harry was beside her as they walked down the dark path near the creek. Each heir carried their familiar. Harry's red black and yellow coral snake was wrapped gently around his neck. Kira's green-bronze cottonmouth was curled around her left forearm. They heard the sounds of Jack Paddlington's gang ahead of them. Together they focused their parsel-magic and immobilized the five teenagers. Revenge was most satisfying./***

Severus walked over to the table as dinner ended. Kira nodded to him before he could say a word. She stood and as she took a step toward him she began to collapse. Harry caught her before Severus could move more than a few inches. The raven haired lad starred defiantly up at his head of house and said, "I'm going with her."

Severus raised an eyebrow. *He reminds me of Lily when he does that.* "This way then," was his soft response before turning to stalk from the Hall. The two first years followed as quickly as they could. Kira was leaning heavily on Harry as they walked to the headmaster's office. Severus slowed down so as not to overstrain Kira. He was worried for her; the only thing he knew that could make a person look that worn in such a short time was the Crucio curse. If something like that had happened he was in trouble. He easily remembered the letter he had received September first as he entered his room that evening...

/ Severus was still wondering about everything that had taken place that evening. Albus' actions concerned him, but he was quickly distracted from his musing as he noticed his unusual visitor. There was a very large raven perched on his favorite chair. The raven was a beautiful specimen with silver tipped ebony wings and eyes that seemed dark green in the flickering firelight. The magnificent bird carried a letter, tied lightly around its leg. Severus could easily see the Dark Mark burned into the letter's waxen seal.

The former Death Eater, spy for the light, professor at Hogwarts cautiously approached the large avian. When he was within an arm's distance the bird lifted its leg toward him. He carefully untied the letter and as soon as the letter was free of its leg, the raven flew toward the fireplace and shot up the chimney faster than lightening. Severus sat down at his table and cautiously broke the seal. He unfolded the letter and began to read.

:To My "Most Loyal" Severus,

By the time you read this letter you will have seen my daughter sorted into your house. You will have also seen the "famous" Harry Potter. They are my heirs. Your loyalty, and therefore your life, is in questionable standing. Protect my heirs and your loyalty to me is proven once again. Fail to keep them safe until graduation and your life is forfeit. I do not tolerate traitors or failure.

Lord Voldemort:

Severus gave the password to the Gargoyle and it hopped aside. He stepped onto the moving staircase with Harry Potter and Kira Riddle just behind him. He knocked on the door and entered after hearing Albus' command to enter. The office was as the heirs remembered it to be, eclectically cluttered. The headmaster stood behind his desk while the pleasantly plump Madame Pomfrey sat comfortably to the right of it. The painfully thin, stuttering moron known as Professor Quirrell stood to the left of the desk, wearing his ridiculous turban and looking very uncomfortable.

Severus scowled at the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor. He prayed to every god he could think of that Professor Pettigrew would resume her post soon, but he knew she probably wouldn't return until her youngest was at Hogwarts. There were times Severus felt her husband, Peter, would be a far more effective Defense teacher than Quirrell was. *I can't believe I compliment the weakest marauder whenever I deal with Quirrell.*

Harry and Kira glanced at the two unexpected guests. *Sis, are you sure you're strong enough for this?*

Yes, her response was quiet yet firm within his mind, *But we need to remove Quirrell from this equation. I haven't trusted him since that day...*

I know, and I will help you convince Dumbledork to get rid of him.

"Please sit down Ms. Riddle, Mr. Potter. Thank you for bringing them Severus. Would anyone care for a lemon drop or some tea?"

Harry and Kira sank into the chair across from the elderly headmaster. They declined the sweets, as did everyone. They also refused the tea, though Madame Pomfrey took a cup. Harry wanted to strangle Dumbledore because both he and Kira could see the faint aura of Veritaserum in the teas they were offered. Albus smiled as he sat down, but Harry could feel, though the newly strengthened empathy Kira was sharing with him, the anger brewing beneath his calm exterior. Both of the heirs felt his wand-less magic pressing on their mental shields. They responded by pushing it back away from them and subsequently away from Severus as well.

Albus barely held the angry sneer off his face as he saw the pendant around young Kira's neck. He could feel its protection spells. He knew he would have to find a way to get it away from her before he could move to use her against Voldemort. The closeness between her and Harry was a thing of concern, but he was sure that separating them would go a long way toward weaning Potter back into the light. He plastered a smile on his face and said, "Thank you for coming Ms. Riddle." She inclined her head toward him, but did not speak. Albus wanted to throttle her arrogance out of her, but instead said, "I asked you here to discuss what happened on the pitch this morning."

"Why are they here?" interrupted Harry in a cold angry voice as he glared at Quirrell.

"Madam Pomfrey is here to make sure that Ms. Riddle is medically alright and Professor Quirrell is here to check that there are no lingering effects from the Dementor. And also help explain why the Dementor showed up inside Hogwarts' wards at all."

Quirrell stuttered, "Y...ye...yes, th...tha...that is w...why I...I'm h...h...here. A...as y...y...you kn...know d...de...demen...dementors a...are v...v...vile th...things th...th...that f...fr...free...freeze y...your s...soul."

Kira looked at him coldly and accessed her newest power. She pulled his warmth and happiness, chilling the core of his being, as she said, "I am the daughter of the Dark Lord. Who says I have a soul?" She pulled back her new power and smiled darkly at the quaking man. His fear was tangent and real for the first time since she's met him, not faked as it usually was. "I will not speak further while Professor Quirrell is in the room," Kira said as she turned to lock eyes with Dumbledore.

Quirrell had felt his insides grow cold as the girl locked eyes with him. His lord and master was right, Riddle was in fact You-Know-Who's original name. Quirrell knew he would have to find a way to rid his master of Riddle and Potter as soon as he could. He only hoped he'd catch them by surprise because he knew eyes like Riddle's... the eyes of someone who was unafraid to kill.

Albus didn't let his anger at Kira's insolence show. He said in his most superior tone, "You can not dictate which Professors I involve in your questioning, Ms. Riddle." The twinkle was gone from his eyes.

Severus couldn't believe he was seeing Albus like this. His old mentor and confidant had become a stranger to him. The man attempting to intimidate an eleven year old girl was not the same man he remembered crying to all those years ago. Why was Albus acting this way? Surely the old man was cracking under the strain... right?

Kira looked at him with a black expression *does he really think I'm that uninformed?* And said, "Actually, Headmaster, unless this is a formal expulsion hearing, which requires the presence of all four house heads and three representatives from the school board, I can dictate who is present."

A strangely superior and cruel smile graced Albus' lips; Severus felt a cold in the pit of his stomach in response to that smile. "And how do you figure that, Ms. Riddle?" Albus asked in a voice as cold as Kira's had been when speaking to Quirrell.

Harry felt himself burning with anger at Dumbledore. He wanted nothing more than to have Cornelius bite the bastard starring down his sister. He also felt her power and anger coiling, much as a snake prepares to strike. He squeezed her hand and sent *Stay Calm sis*.

I am calm was Kira's response. She deadpanned her voice and let it quiver in the air as she said, "Easy, according to the Hogwarts' Charter rewrite of 1965 section thirty nine subsection M 'No student shall be asked questions of a private nature by any Professor other than their head of house or the headmaster. Furthermore no professor shall be given access to said private information other than those already stated. In the event that the head of house or headmaster feels another professor is needed to resolve problems of a private nature, the additional professor must be one the student approves of.'"

Albus Dumbledore narrowed his eyes in badly concealed anger, "Well then Ms. Riddle, I need an expert on the Dark Arts to be present. Who would you accept in Professor Quirrell's stead?"

"Since there is no other exclusive expert on the Dark Arts, I request someone who has a strong overall grasp of most subjects. I think Professor Flitwick would be more than suitable." *Although I do think Professor Snape probably knows more than even you about the dark arts. He is a Death Eater after all.*

Albus nodded slightly. Filius was loyal to him, not as malleable as Quirrell, but never the less someone he could manipulate later. He turned to the stuttering man and said, "Professor Quirrell, thank you for coming, but you may go now." Quirrell left after nodding slightly. Albus then summoned a house elf to fetch the head of Ravenclaw house. After the little elf vanished again, Albus looked back at Kira and said, "I don't suppose you have some rule or other that prevents Madam Pomfrey from examining your health, do you?"

Kira, Harry, and Severus wanted to shut up Dumbledore then quite a bit. He had butchered the suave Malfoy-like tones so that they sounded grotesque to ears so used to hearing Lucius and Draco speak. "There is no rule preventing the resident mediwitch from examining me. However, she will have to wait until this nonsense is over and I'm in the infirmary. There are privacy rules within the Charter." She gave a slight smile to the mediwitch, telling the woman without words that she would give the older lady no problems during the examination.

Severus was amazed by Kira Riddle's ability to enrage Albus Dumbledore. He had never known another capable of riling the Headmaster up as much as she was. He was also impressed by her intense knowledge of the Charter. He marveled at her ability to read the truth of Filius Flitwick, no student would believe the skill level the shorter man possessed in duels. Severus kept his impassive mask in place and waited silently with the other occupants of the room.

Harry took the waiting time to prepare for anything. He carefully began to add layers to his mind shield. He noticed Kira was doing the same and as he looked at her with mystic sight became slightly concerned. Her shield was much weaker than his and normally their shields were about equal. He squeezed the hand he was still holding and sent energy to her through their link. *Thank you*, her voice resounded within his mind.

A quiet knock sounded on the door and Albus said, "Come in Filius." The door swung open and the incredibly short man entered the office. He glanced at everyone in the room as he closed the door.

He took a few steps into the room and looked at Albus, "Why did you wish to see me Albus?"

"I am questioning Ms. Riddle and needed an expert on the dark arts," the old headmaster replied.

"Wouldn't Professor Quirrell have been a better choice? He is the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher after all." Severus and the heirs had to fight their smirks at the back-handed compliment.

"Yes, however Ms. Riddle does not wish him to know whatever is said in here tonight and because of privacy rules within the school Charter, she was allowed to determine who could be here. She thought you would be an adequate substitute dark arts expert and I agreed."

Filius looked at the girl he thought misplaced by the sorting hat and saw she had a faint smile for him. He noticed then just how pale she was. He was no longer surprised that she skipped classes that afternoon. He had heard some of the rumors concerning the first year flying lesson and by her appearance he was willing to believe some of what he had heard. He glanced back at Albus and said, "Alright, I'll sit in for the questioning and offer my expert insights."

Albus nodded but before he could speak an oversized Raven flew out of his fireplace. All eyes watched as it swooped up and away from Albus before diving down to Harry and Kira. Harry held up an arm and the large bird landed on the proffered arm. The silver tipped wings fluttered slightly as it settled down. The Raven had two letters and a small packet tied to it.

"Hello Ann," said Harry. He petted her as Kira untied her three burdens. Ann chirruped at Harry and then cocked her head toward Kira. Kira gave Ann a smile before looking at the two letters. Both letters bore the Dark Mark on their waxen seals. One was addressed to Albus the other was to Kira. The packet had parsel-writing, it read **shrunk threshold potions**.

Kira said, "This one is for you, headmaster." She tossed it lightly to his desk as she stuffed her letter into her pocket. Ann move over to Harry's shoulder, the one near Kira and chirped quietly at the pale girl.

Albus scowled at the letter and did not touch it. "Do you expect me to touch something that is clearly a trap of Voldemort's?"

Kira shrugged and Harry rolled his eyes. It was all Severus could do not to roll his eyes as well. Harry then reached out and plucked the letter from Albus' desk and said, "I'll read it out loud since you're afraid to touch it, sir." Harry broke the seal and unfolded the parchment before Albus could react to the young boy. Nothing happened. Harry began to read;

": Albus

Greetings my 'dear old' transfigurations teacher. (Harry was using vocal inflections that would make Voldemort proud. Kira kept herself from smiling at the sound.) I am writing to you because I am certain you plan on harassing my daughter even more than you harassed Harry. Yes I am aware of your attempt to 'intimidate' my location out of Harry and I am highly disappointed. I didn't think you would sink lower than I when you attempted to obtain your information. However I digress from the matter at hand.

I am aware of what my daughter did on the quidditch pitch this morning. I understand that she over extended her powers to protect a foolish Gryffindor (Kira frowned) and that she caused a trigger event to occur by doing so. If the Dementor hadn't shown up I assure you I would be there in person looking after my dark heiress. Seeing as the Dementor did show up and give Kira what she needed to begin stabilization of her magic, I will not be arriving anytime soon at the school. However I have sent her fresh threshold potions, they are shrunk in the small packet that arrived with this letter. I expect her to be allowed to take these potions without interference from either you or the esteemed Poppy.

At this point I am certain you wonder what a trigger event is and why Kira experienced one. As you know, I have undergone numerous magical transformations. Those transformations allowed me to survive a reflected killing curse and granted me incredible powers.

They also affected my blood in a powerful way. They created energy which was passed to my daughter so that she undergoes the very same transformations without needing to seek out the old places of power. These adjustments to her magic are known as trigger events because they are triggered by extreme magical stress. Stress such as what happened this morning when she exhausted her magical reserves to help the Gryffindor.

Unlike my transformations, Kira's are not controlled by ritual. Because of this she needs various potions and other things to pass through the transformation unharmed. My wife and I have found over the years that Kira needs various creatures' blood, tears, and sometimes venom immediately after the transformation is triggered. The creature that has what we need usually shows up without us calling for it. They seem to know when Kira requires them and what she needs from them. This combined with the threshold potions which my wife and I have designed stabilize Kira.

This should answer any question you have concerning what happened today. While I am sure you have other invasive questions, I will not answer them. I only have one other thing to add to this entirely too long a letter. While my daughter is safely attending Hogwarts, the wizarding world need not fear me. Should anything happen to her or Harry Potter, I will make sure the word burns with my wrath.

Have a pleasant evening.

Lord Voldemort:"

At the sound of the Dark Lord's name Madam Pomfrey and Filius Flitwick shivered. Albus scowled outright and the marring of his normally pleasant grandfatherly visage was grotesque. "I suppose that is an adequate response to most of my questions except one." His scowl lifted and a predatory smile appeared on his lips, "How did you save Mr. Longbottom when that spell is a fourth year charm?"

Severus was wondering that as well, but he was disturbed by Albus' smile. So many observations were changing, on a subconscious level, his views on the aged headmaster. The fact that the wand-less magical manipulations weren't touching him probably helped.

Kira met Albus Dumbledore's bright blue eyes. *No one this annoying should be allowed to have such lovely eyes... I'd love to feed them to the ravens.* She softly said, "How do you think?" **Parsel-magic you old fool!**

Her hissing response unnerved all but Harry. He held his face in a mask and refused to laugh. Albus' head had snapped back in surprise. Severus' eyes had widened *She shares her father's gift?!* in stunned shock.

Albus regained control of himself and said in a cold commanding voice, "Repeat whatever you just said in Parseltounge, this time say it in English."

"Why? If you can't understand my answer, I have no reason to clarify it for you."

"Because you will not leave this office until I have an answer."

Harry rolled his eyes and Ann chirped in avian annoyance. "Isn't it obvious sir? She's a Parselmouth; obviously she used Parsel-magic."

"Parsel-magic is real," asked Filius in surprise.

Both Harry and Kira nodded. Severus remained quiet, suddenly some of Voldemort's magics made sense. Harry replied, "Yes, Father is quite proficient in it."

"Voldemort is not your father!" said Albus in feigned exasperation.

"We've been over this headmaster. Voldemort is the only father figure I've known."

"He is using you Mr. Potter. He is trying to make you into something your parents would not have wanted." Albus said this in a concerned voice.

Severus thought his voice was false in its sincerity and wondered again why he was seeing these things.

Harry felt the falseness and once again pushed back the wand-less manipulations. Harry growled out in anger, "And you are not trying to mold me to your own designs? You aren't trying to turn me into your little hero for the light? You aren't doing your best to convince me that you have my best interests at heart?" His voice was blisteringly harsh. Even Severus wondered at the venom this eleven year old boy could put into his words.

Albus dramatically sighed, "Harry, my boy, I do have your best interests in heart and mind. I want and have always wanted what's best for you."

"Is that why you originally left me with the Dursleys?"

"Yes it is. The blood magic of your mother's sacrifice would have been maintained by the presence of Petunia Dursley."

Harry tilted his head and Ann chirped at him. "And you had no idea how they would have treated me? You didn't check the next day to make sure I was safe or well?" Albus attempted to interrupt. Harry said angrily, "Don't interrupt, SIR. I know you didn't bother with my wellness or safety. I know because I have seen the memories of the Death Eater who rescued me. I saw the use of a shotgun, with a silencing spell around it, in the deaths of Petunia and Vernon Dursley. I watched the search of the three bedrooms. I saw that the only child found was a fat little pig of a boy with blond hair. I watched as the search became rather frantic until a barely vocal wail came from the cupboard under the staircase. Inside the space, which wasn't more than one by two meters long and a meter and a half high, the Death Eater found me. I was wrapped in dirty rags and my diaper hadn't been changed in days. I had been left with my own bodily wastes so long that I was sick for almost a week after I was rescued. If I had stayed where you wanted, I may not be here today. Now tell me headmaster, did you truly have my best interests at heart?" During his tirade, Harry had stood up and was leaning over the desk with his fiercely angry face just inches from the headmaster's.

Albus looked into the dark emerald green eyes that burned with unbridled fury. He had found himself shrinking away as Harry leaned forward. There was almost tangibly dark angry energy flowing from

the boy. The raven cawed angrily at Albus and Harry backed away from the headmaster. Harry stood with cold dignity and straightened his robe. Severus was stunned by what Harry had said concerning the Dursleys. Never would he have believed that Albus would leave an innocent child with such cruel people. Harry said, "Since we are done here, sir, I will return to my dorm with Professor Snape while Kira accompanies Madam Pomfrey. Have a good evening Headmaster."

Kira had gotten to her feet as Harry said the last part. She said, "Good evening Headmaster," before taking a few steps toward Poppy. Madam Pomfrey quickly put a supportive arm around the girl. Severus opened the door and nodded to the two ladies as they left. He then fell in step behind Harry as the boy followed them out.

The office was silent. Filius shook his head and left as well. Albus looked around the office. It was empty except for the portraits and Fawkes. The phoenix didn't even seem very supportive at that moment. He wondered how he had lost control of the situation. He lowered his head to his hands. He shook with emotion.

& &

Alright another chapter finished... yippee.

REVIEW responses:

Shadowface Thank you... he will most definitely remain dark, guaranteed... I'm trying for an update a week and so far I'm achieving my goals... yeah!!!

Sword and Magic Thank

muggle Thank you... I shall.

SRAndrews Yes well... it is apparent to me that Ron is very much capable of being a bigoted jerk based on cannon... especially when you look at forth year, and you never know how Draco could have been if Harry had taken his hand on the train. Also in this story Kira, Blaise, Draco and Harry have grown up together... they know each other as well as they know themselves.

Miss Lesley Yes you are right...it wasn't a lot, but it will impact quite a bit... Vorla is rather cool(in my opinion) and I have no plans of killing her off... I feel Slytherin had an ulterior motive for having a basilisk around... you are right the four kids do have great potential, after all they have been groomed since birth for specific purposes...

Kage Mirai Here's an update. I don't really dislike Dumbledore... I just don't much care for manipulative idiots who hide their thirst for power... don't worry he'll get what's coming to him... it just may take awhile for the full punishment to happen.

Chapter 7

THE STONE?

Severus left Harry at the entrance to the Slytherin common room and headed back up to the infirmary. He was rather amazed at how well behaved the raven, Ann, had been. She had sat quietly on Harry's shoulder the entire walk from the headmaster's office. When he arrived at the infirmary a section of the room was curtained off. He could hear Poppy muttering hear scanning spells. He moved quietly and gracefully toward the partition. He stopped before he could see behind it and cleared his throat noisily. The sound caught Kira's attention because she said, "Hello again Professor Snape."

Poppy then added, "We will be with you in a moment, if you could wait where you are please."

"Of course Madam Pomfrey," replied Severus silkily. He took a few steps back and waited. He heard a few more whispered charms before Poppy said, "Go on dear and put your robe back on." She then stepped around the partition and looked at the snarky potions master. "Ms. Riddle is receiving a clean bill of health. She will be taking the potions her father sent her and a few pepper-up potions for the next few days."

Severus nodded, "That is good news. Is she ready to return to the common room or will she need to stay the night?"

Kira walked around the partition and said, "I'll be returning to the dorms."

Poppy nodded, "Yes you are. Now I'll just get those pepper-up potions and Professor Snape can escort you back to your dorm." She then walked to her potion storage room and fetched four days worth of the potion.

Severus waited as Poppy told Kira the directions for using the pepper-up potion. Kira thanked the medi-witch and then stepped over to Severus. She smirked slightly, "I'm ready when you are sir."

Severus nodded, "This way Ms. Riddle." He set a hand on her shoulder and guided her out of the infirmary. He stayed half a pace behind her as she slowly walked down to the dungeons. She stopped at the entrance and said, "Godric Gryffindor." The snake carving hissed and the slate black entrance rippled. Kira hid a slight smile at the snake's comment and then entered. Severus followed; he had caught her smile and wondered what was so funny that the carving could possibly have said.

Inside the common room Harry, Draco and Blaise waited on the couches. Ann was still with them, perched on the mantle of the fireplace. The three serpents looked up as the Professor and their fourth member entered. Draco tilted his head slightly and asked, "Is everything okay Professor?"

"Yes Mr. Malfoy. I just came to make sure Ms. Riddle got back safely." Severus' voice was soft and one could hear the veiled concern, if one was used to slight vocal inflections speaking volumes.

"Thank you Professor," said Harry.

Severus nodded and then left the common room. Harry helped Kira over to the couches and then sat back down. Kira sat down and removed the packet of potions from her pocket. She hissed **Return to normal size** at the potion case it contained. The case enlarged to about five times its size. She opened it and took out one potion vial. After draining the potion she then hissed **Reduce in size to a fifth of your original size**. The potion case shrunk to the size it had been during transit.

Harry, Draco and Blaise had waited 'patiently' while she did that. Draco whined, if you knew how to read Malfoy vocal inflections, "Come on, I know your father sent a letter. Read it already."

Blaise and Harry shook their heads in response. Kira smirked and dug the letter out of her pocket. She broke the seal and unfolded it. She then began to read out loud;

":Dearest Daughter and Son,

I know you will be reading this with Blaise and Draco present; that is fine for I will not say anything they cannot hear. I want to let you know that in spite of my words to the contrary in the letter to Dumbledore, I am very proud of your actions earlier today. I know I was away when you called earlier and I'm sorry I was unable to tell you that in person. If you feel the need to let others, outside of house Slytherin, know of your parentage you may do so. I warn against that revelation of course, but I know you both read people exceptionally well.

Tell Draco and Blaise that their loyalty to you reflects on their personal and family honor. Let them know that their continued friendship and loyalty will be remembered and they shall always be considered part of our family. Remember to look out for one another and to reach out to the outcasts of the other houses. Do not forget why we sent you both to Hogwarts, learning magic was only part of the reason. Don't forget to make friends and well as contacts and followers. Stay safe, my heirs, and never forget that your mother and I love you both.

Father :"

Draco and Blaise smiled slightly. Harry looked up toward Ann and smiled. Kira folded the letter and said, "Let's go down to the clubhouse. The potion has kicked in enough that I should be fine.

Harry nodded, "I'll get the map and my cloak; Blaise can get yours." Blaise nodded and headed to the dorms with Harry. Draco looked at Kira as they sat alone, waiting, and smirked. She shook her head in response. Harry and Blaise returned to the room carrying shimmering cloaks. Harry also had an aged folded piece of parchment.

Blaise helped Kira stand and the two girls got under the cloak. After they disappeared from view Harry, with Ann on his shoulder, and Draco got under his cloak. There was a whisper of, "I solemnly swear I am up to no good," from Harry.

Alright sis, move out the door, the hall way is clear.

Roger will-co, was her mental reply.

The black entrance rippled a moment later and then a few seconds after that it rippled again. Quiet footsteps could be heard moving away from the Slytherin dorm. *Stay near the wall and move quietly. The only person currently in the halls is Filch and he is near Gryffindor tower.*

Good, Blaise and I will be as silent as mice. The footsteps moved quickly through the halls until they became small splashes outside of Myrtle's bathroom. The splashes moved to the door and passed over the threshold as the door opened. The door closed. *It's safe to remove the cloaks.*

Kira smiled as she pulled the cloak off of herself and Blaise in response to Harry's thought. Harry pulled off his cloak as well. He then tapped wand to parchment and whispered, "Mischief managed."

Kira slowly walked to the sink and hissed **Stairway open**. The wall slid open and revealed the stairs. Harry took the lead with Draco right behind him. Kira stepped in next and Blaise brought up the rear position. Ann was silent as they descended. Kira hissed **Close** once all four were within the narrow staircase.

Harry hissed **Open** when he reached the black marble entrance of the chamber. The quartet entered the strangely cozy chamber of secrets. Ann flew from Harry's shoulder and transformed. Mrs. Riddle looked at the four children, "I cannot believe the audacity of that man. Who does he think he is? Telling you what your parents would and wouldn't want you to be. He is far worse than any so called dark wizard I have ever known. At least Tom doesn't hide the fact that he uses his Death Eaters; that horrible man will need to be punished for his insolence very soon."

The quartet smirked. Draco said, "Hello auntie..."

"Hi Mrs. Riddle," Blaise said at the same time.

"Hi mom," added Harry as he smiled at the antics of his two friends.

Kira shook her head and huffed a quiet laugh before saying, "Hello Mom." She then walked over and hugged the lovely woman.

Mrs. Riddle smiled and shook her head at herself. "Hello children," she looked around the chamber after releasing her daughter. "Tom wasn't joking when he said this place was impressive." The kids nodded as she moved to the couches. They sat down and she let her beautiful eyes travel over the four children. "So tell me everything that has happened thus far." The quartet launched into a tale of everything that had happened so far that year. When they finished talking she said, "Well it sounds like this year has been rather enjoyable so far and I hate to change that but I'm afraid I have to. Tom has heard some rather disturbing news."

"What is wrong mother?" asked Harry.

"Apparently there is a wanna-be dark lord on the rise. He has his eye set on immortality and has tried to steal the philosopher's stone from Gringotts. He failed because the stone had been removed prior to the break in. We believe it is currently in Dumbledore's keeping. Tom wants you to pay attention to anything unusual and keep us informed."

"Well the third floor corridor is considered forbidden, and according to Hermione, Ron Weasley says there's a giant three headed dog inside." Harry informed her.

"Hm... take out the map again," Mrs Riddle instructed. Harry did so and activated it. She took it from him and looked at it. She said, "Most magnificent Marauders is there anything unusual in the third floor corridor? I am thinking trap doors, hidden passages, or false walls."

Writing scrawled across the parchment Who inquires of the fabulous Moony, Padfoot, Prongs and Wormtail?

Mrs. Riddle quirked her lip and replied, "Feather-head"

The writing changed styles Ah, the most lovely Feather-head, well for such an esteemed princess of magic we will reveal to you that there is a trap door which leads to a series of caverns under the castle.

"Can you show me the place these caverns lead to on the map?"

The writing changed yet again For the Feather-brained one, anything. The caverns are a chain of rooms which ends only twenty meters from the north wall of this room. By the way... when did the Chamber of Secrets get added to our map?

“When the heirs of the Legacy came to Hogwarts,” Mrs Riddle replied. “Thank you most wonderful Wormtail, Prongs, Padfoot and Moony. Mischief managed.” The map became blank again.

“That’s the north wall,” said Harry as he pointed to the wall with the entrance into the catacombs.

“What’s beyond that door?” asked Mrs. Riddle.

“The Basilisk and the catacombs under the school,” answered Kira.

“Is there anyway into that final cavernous room, do you think?” asked her mother.

“Possibly, there are a lot of ancient parsel-spells all over the chamber and catacombs.” Harry told her while Kira nodded in agreement.

“Well if there is, please find it. If you can retrieve the stone, that would be even better.”

“If we find it, what do we do with it?” asked Draco.

“Send word so Tom or I can retrieve it from you.”

“Yes Ma’am,” all four responded.

She chuckled, “Now, Tom said there is an apparition point within the chamber, where is it?”

“It’s the eight pointed star in the corner,” replied Harry as he pointed to it.

Mrs. Riddle smiled, stood and hugged all four children. She then walked over to the chaos star and said, “Be safe and get to bed soon.”

“We will auntie...” Blaise and Draco said.

While Harry and Kira said at the same time, “We will mom.”

Mrs. Riddle then disappeared from within Hogwarts wards. Her use of the star activated it for later use as a place to apparate into Hogwarts, so long as you had a connection to the chamber or the star. The quartet then used the House door for Slytherin in order to reach the common room without any encounters. They all fell exhausted into their beds. Kira barely remembered to take her second threshold potion before she fell unconscious.

[illegible]

I know this is earlier than a week and I'm happy.

Anyway I have good news and bad news. Bad news is I am normally an abysmally slow typist. Good news is the first year is finished in its handwritten form, so all I have to do is type it. So that leads to the, I plan on updating once a week because I type so slowly, there is a reason I am not a receptionist of computer programmer. i

Chapter 8

SECRETS

Morning arrived too fast. It was the first morning Harry could remember exercising alone. Harry had touched Kira's mind upon waking only to be gently pushed out with a mental moan. After he showered he tried to touch her mind again and received a weary *I'm up. We'll be out in a moment.* Draco and he walked out to the common room and waited for the two girls. Draco spoke with a few of the Slytherins as they waited and reported that the house would fully support the dark heiress. First and foremost, Slytherins were loyal to their own.

Blaise and Kira entered the common room. Harry could sense even more changes in the flow of magic around Kira. He realized she was also wearing her protection pendent under her robe. He nodded reassuringly to her and the quartet headed up to breakfast. The few non-Slytherin students in the great hall glared with malice at the four first year serpents as they walked to their table. The glares were ignored as the quartet sat down to eat. For them it was a very quiet meal. Blaise, Draco, and Harry knew how drained Kira still was and didn't push conversation. Harry noticed that Kira ate protein rich foods and almost no carbohydrates. He wondered at that, the dark blood craved protein only when completely new powers could be accessed.

The other three tables were much more alive with whispers. The Great Hall filled up quickly and rather more completely than a typical Saturday morning. The entire student body, minus a few here and there, arrived before breakfast was even a fourth over. Albus Dumbledore stood up as Minerva McGonagall tapped her spoon against a glass. The hall quieted and all eyes turned to the head table.

"Knowing Hogwarts as I do, I know that rumors of what happened at yesterday morning's flying lesson have spread over the entire school. I wish to negate some of those rumors for as we all know gossip is a very dangerous past-time. The truth is Ms. Riddle saved Mr. Longbottom from a very painful fall. Ms. Riddle magically exhausted herself by doing so. Her power was replenished by the magical blood

of the Dementor. This does not make Ms. Riddle a monster because as we all know the blood of different magical creatures is very potent and rife with energy. Ms. Riddle showed herself to be a fine example of a witch by protecting another student. She suffered so that he would not and I don't believe she should be shunned or punished for her actions. I encourage you to forget the foolish rumors and go back to your normal routines. I wish you all a pleasant weekend." He smiled with that annoying twinkle in his eyes.

Kira looked at Harry *What the bloody hell is he up to?*

"I wish I knew," said Harry in a low whisper, "his speech has no purpose I can see."

"Perhaps it is meant to show Uncle Tom that the old goat isn't holding Kira's blood against her. You know as an attempt to get us to lower our guard." Draco said this in a conspiratory whisper.

"If that's the case, it won't work," said Blaise, "Uncle Tom is way too smart for that. And I'd like to think that we are too smart to fall for something so stupid ourselves."

The other three nodded thoughtfully. Harry said, "But no one ever said the manipulative old fool is intelligent enough to convince father or us of anything."

"Let's go," pleaded Kira weakly, "I need to meditate and solitude would help immensely right now." She sent to Harry *I'd prefer the clubhouse.*

The four stood and slowly made their way from the great hall. Five students from the Gryffindor table stood up and quickly followed. Outside the Great Hall, Ron Weasley, flanked by Seamus and Dean, said, "Hey snakes don't you have some rock to crawl under?"

"Leave them alone!" yelled Hermione before any of the quartet could react.

Ron spun around and snarled, "Stay out of it you slimy know-it-all snake loving traitor."

The quartet had turned by this. Due to the strengthening of Kira's empathy, both she and Harry could feel Hermione's emotional distress. Even without the empathy the pain was clearly written on her face. Harry used his deadliest voice and said, "Weasel you can either apologize to Hermione or suffer the consequences."

Ron spun back toward the serpents, "Screw You!"

Harry calmly nodded and raised his wand. "Stupefy," his voice rang out with clear anger. His spell was joined by two other stupefy spells as Blaise and Draco cast their stunners at Dean and Seamus. The three Gryffindors hit the floor hard. Hermione's eyes widened in surprise and Neville jumped back with a frightened squeak.

"Why did you do that?" asked Hermione.

"Because no one hurts our friends," replied Harry.

"We need to remove them and ourselves from this location," Kira said softly.

"Let's really teach them a lesson," said Blaise before she levitated Dean. Draco did the same to Seamus as he smirked at the prospect of teaching the annoying Gryffindorks a lesson. Harry used his wand to levitate Ron.

"Come with us if you want to help," offered Harry to the two friendly lions. He then led the way to an empty classroom two hall ways over. Neville shrugged and followed. Hermione shook her head but followed anyway.

The quartet and five Gryffindors entered the dusty classroom. The three unconscious lions were dropped to the floor without concern. Kira cast a quick dusting charm on the chairs and sat down. "Well what should we do with them?" Kira asked.

Hermione, who had been impressed with their magical knowledge, asked, "How do you guys know so much more magic than any other first year?"

Harry smirked, "Our families were very insistent on us knowing enough magic to protect ourselves."

"Especially Uncle Tom," added Blaise.

"Really, why?"

"Because our families have many enemies. Enemies who would not be opposed to using children for leverage," replied Draco ominously.

"Oh."

"I think we should transfigure their robes into pink tutus and charm the music from Swan Lake to follow them around," suggested Blaise, steering the conversation back to a Gryffindor lesson.

"If we do that we have to have some way to get them to dance before the school before they get un-charmed," added Draco.

"Let's do it. I'll take care of the dancing compulsion," said Kira.

"Are you sure you're up to it sis?"

"You shouldn't do any strong magic until you recover," whispered Neville with a slight blush.

Kira smiled a sweet, gentle smile at Neville and said, "I won't recover fully until I start to use some of my power again. Trust me, I'll be fine."

Neville nodded. Hermione said, "Isn't compulsive magic considered dark and illegal?"

"The only compulsive spell that's illegal is Imperious," replied Harry, "Kira will not be using that spell."

"What spell are you going to use?" asked Hermione to Kira.

Parsel-compulsion replied Kira in a soft hiss.

Neville's eyes popped wide open in shock while Hermione jumped back in fear. Everyone knew Parselmouths were evil dark wizards

and witches. "You're a Parselmouth?!" stuttered the frightened muggle-born witch.

Kira nodded as the three serpents looked at her passively while questions danced in their eyes. She sighed slightly, "Yes I am a Parselmouth. It is a gift I inherited from my father."

"But the last living Parselmouth was You-Know-Who," breathed Neville fearfully.

"You mean Lord Voldemort," asked Harry as Hermione and Neville flinched at the sound of his name.

"There is no reason to fear the name. It is only a name," said Kira in response to their fear.

"But he's an evil monster and invoking his name brings bad luck," stammered Neville.

The quartet shook their heads. They had dealt with Voldemort for as long as they could remember and the title did not invoke any hint of fear because they knew the man behind the title. Harry gently said, "Voldemort's name does not bring bad luck. The fear a person generates in response to the name is what causes negative outcomes."

"Why aren't you afraid to say His name?" asked Hermione quietly.

"Because I've called him Father all of my life," replied Harry.

"And he IS my Father," added Kira.

The two conscious Gryffindors looked at the two Slytherins in shock. Finally Hermione said, "Didn't he kill your parents, Harry? And isn't your last name Riddle?"

"Yes," replied Harry with a smirk and a shake of his head.

"Yes," responded Kira with a smile.

"Before judging, would you listen to our story?" asked Harry.

Both lions nodded. Draco, see semi-resolution, interrupted petulantly, "Let's do our prank first."

"Don't whine Draco," whispered Blaise.

"Malfoys don't whine. I was not whining."

The heirs hid their smirks at his tone. Blaise was not so successful in hiding her smirk; then again she wasn't trying to hide it.

"Okay," said Neville while Hermione just nodded her head and sat down.

"Thanks," said Harry to the two Gryffindors. He turned back to the unconscious lions and smirked. He Blaise, and Draco began to transfigure their robes. Soon all three boys were wearing bright red leggings, neon pink tutu skirts, and gold leotard tops. A few moments later the melody from Swan Lake flowed from them. Harry waved his wand and the music silenced.

Kira then walked over to them. She knelt beside Ron first. She brought her lips near Ron's ear and set a hand on his chest. **Heed my will, Heed my voice. Do my command with skill, Do my command with grace. Wake refreshed in four hours, Walk to the Great Hall, Perform for all your' honors, Take a bow in front of all, Your bow makes your will your own, So you can do then as you are prone.**

A soft silver pink light framed him like an aura before sinking into his skin. She then moved to Dean and Seamus; casting the same parsel-spell as she did so. Harry thought that the 'rhyming' she was using would help set her will into effect quite nicely. Parsel-magic was the most powerful dark magic in existence because as you became stronger you could literally speak your will in Parseltounge and it would happen. At earlier stages of Parsel-magic you had to 'rhyme' what you were saying in order for your will to occur.

Harry watched the play of energy around Kira and saw it stabilizing more. The dark energy needed to be used, as she had told Neville not in so many words. Color began to return to her pale visage as she performed her magic. When she finished casting on Seamus she

looked normal once again. Harry was very happy to see her magic was stable again, though quite a bit stronger. He would have to ask what new power had manifested.

Kira stood up and smiled. Neville and Hermione looked at her. They had been shocked to discover that the parsel-language had a strangely alluring quality to it. They had found her hisses oddly beautiful. Kira could feel their surprise and slight awe of her parsel-abilities. She said, "Set the silence spell to end when they wake," to Harry.

He nodded, adjusted the spell and then turned back, "So do we talk here or somewhere else?"

"Somewhere else," said Draco.

"Somewhere no one can listen in," added Blaise. Draco glared at her a mouthed 'that's what I meant.'

"How about the clubhouse? I trust them," Kira said.

"Clubhouse it is," said Harry. "Follow us," he told Hermione and Neville.

The two curious lions followed the four serpents. They went to Myrtle's bathroom on the second floor. As they walked, using hidden passages, Kira and Harry conversed telepathically.

Harry began *How much do we tell them?*

Almost everything. I say we leave out certain names, but stick to the events accurately.

So that means we use tenses that apply best in the situation 'everyone' knows?

Yes, if we tell the story that way, they will understand and none of the devastating secrets will be revealed.

So do we tell them why you had to drink Dementor blood as part of the story?

That would be for the best.

Ace, okay here we are. Now we are only letting them know you are a Parselmouth and not me, right?

Correct.

The quartet and two lions slipped into Myrtle's bathroom and Hermione said, "Why are we here? Don't you know there's a ghost here who can hear us?"

"This is just a stop over," said Blaise as Kira walked to the sink with the snake carving.

She hissed **Stairway open**. Hermione and Neville jumped back as the wall moved aside to reveal a narrow stairway. Harry began to walk down followed by Draco.

Blaise looked at Hermione and Neville and said, "After you."

Hermione went first and Neville followed. Blaise stepped in behind Neville and Kira entered last. She hissed **Close**. Harry stopped before the Black marble entrance and whispered his hiss **open** to the golden eyed serpent. He entered the chamber.

Hermione watched Harry and Draco pass through solid marble and enter the chamber. The marble had rippled as they passed through it and she took a deep breath before stepping through it herself. Neville gulped slightly after Hermione vanished through the black surface. He walked forward and was pushed gently through as he hesitated at the threshold by Blaise.

Hermione looked around the Chamber in awe. "What is this place?"

"That's part of the story," replied Harry. "Come sit down." He walked to the couches.

Hermione and Neville, no less awed, followed to the couches. Blaise and Kira joined them. The six youths sprawled on the couches in comfortable positions. Silence reigned for a few moments before Hermione asked, "So are you going to tell us?"

"Before we do, can you give us your word that you will keep what we tell you secret unless you are given Veritaserum?" asked Kira.

"Is this knowledge dangerous?" asked Neville.

"All knowledge can be dangerous, this is a bit more so than most," Kira replied. "The story we want to share with you could cause havoc within the wizarding world if certain people knew it."

"Dumbledore knows bits and pieces because he is a part of the history, but if he knew everything, he would probably try to kill Kira," said Harry.

"He'd never..." Hermione began.

"You don't know that," interrupted Draco.

"Desperate men take whatever means they can to achieve their aims. Dumbledore desperately wants to defeat Voldemort and Kira is a key to doing so," added Blaise.

"He wouldn't hesitate to use or kill Kira if he thought it would prevent Voldemort from achieving his goals," concluded Harry.

"I promise," said Neville. The chamber accepted his promise as a word bond and forged the spell to hold him to it. He never felt the energy bond to him, but the heirs felt the shift and were glad.

Hermione looked at Neville questioningly, but she wanted to know, and so she said, "I promise as well." The chamber responded to her promise the same way as Neville's. Hermione noticed warmth but thought nothing of it.

"Thank you," said Kira softly.

"Alright, to understand we have to take you back to the beginning. We begin with a young witch in the roaring twenties who fell madly in love with a muggle named Thomas Riddle. They had a fast paced passionate love affair that ended when she became pregnant. At first he was going to marry her and do right by her and the baby, but then he discovered she was a witch. He broke off the relationship and cast

her out of his life. She was unfortunate enough to be a single pregnant teenage witch in the wizarding world. At the time both muggle and wizarding worlds frowned upon a woman who was pregnant out of wedlock. She was forced to make her own way.” Harry had begun the tale in a voice controlled and involving. “Her family disowned her because she was a disgrace to their pureblooded line. She ended up giving birth in a muggle hospital. Complications during the birth caused her to hemorrhage and she only survived long enough to name her son. She named him Thomas, after his father, Marvolo, after his grandfather, Riddle.”

Kira took over, her voice engaging, “Tom Riddle was placed in an orphanage. The orphanage was not a very good or caring one. It was run by an ex-soldier who had survived the first muggle world war. The man had seen too much and was mentally scarred. Because of his mental imbalances he drank too much and beat the children. Tom was too odd to get adopted as a small boy and as he grew his oddity increased. The orphanage director beat him more than any other child because of his strangeness.”

Hermione gasped. Neville’s eyes seemed to glow with swirling emotion.

“No matter how badly he beat Tom, Tom never stayed hurt for long. Because he was a powerful wizard he healed at an incredible rate. Shortly after his eleventh birthday his Hogwarts letter arrived. The headmaster at the time was Professor Dippet. Headmaster Dippet escorted young Tom to Diagon Alley where the Gringotts goblins were able to supply Tom with a key to his family vault. His Grandfather had died not long after his birth and written a will to pass the family estates and fortunes to Tom Riddle after he turned eighteen. Until his eighteenth birthday, Tom was allowed a hefty stipend to use for schooling. Tom came to Hogwarts in the late thirties and was the only half-blood sorted into Slytherin in the last century.”

Harry took up the story again, “Tom was a very intelligent, cunning and ruthless child. He had grown up in an environment of hatred and distrust. He flourished in Slytherin and quickly made a name for himself in spite of his heritage. He excelled in classes and learned the

axioms of the serpent house. Hogwarts became his real home, his sanctuary. He had hoped and prayed that he would be able to make Hogwarts truly his home, but the transfigurations professor, one Albus Dumbledore, convinced Headmaster Dippet to send Tom back to the orphanage in the summer. Slowly Tom began to resent many of his peers and anger toward Dumbledore forged its way into hatred. Then something unexpected happened in his third year, a girl named Myrtle Riddle was sorted into Hufflepuff."

"What?" exclaimed Hermione in surprise.

Harry and Kira gave identical mirthless laughs. Blaise and Draco were listening intently because they now realized there were some things the heirs were telling which they didn't even know. Kira answered, "It turned out that Thomas Riddle SR. had some dormant magic in his blood. One of his five children had been born a witch."

"Indeed, Myrtle was Thomas' half sister," continued Harry. "Tom figured that out very quickly and tried to befriend her. He thought she was an opportunity to finally have family in his life. He was very wrong in that thought because she shunned him. She refused his friendship and snubbed his overtures of kindness. She told him she refused to associate with bastards."

"That's a horrible thing to say," interjected Hermione.

"Yes it is," replied Kira, "and because of that Tom's borderline hatred became a poison in his soul. He came to hate Myrtle with a passion only matched by his hatred of the sadistic orphanage caretaker. He vowed vengeance against Myrtle, Riddle SR. and Riddle's family. He vowed that the Riddles would pay for the death of his mother and the pain he had endured at the orphanage. He discovered the existence of the Chamber of Secrets later that year while he was looking for dark magic to use against the Riddle family. He didn't find the entrance until the middle of his fifth year."

"When he first found the Chamber he entered the hard way, a tunnel rather than stairs," continued Harry. "Tom found the portrait of Salazar Slytherin which resides in the Chamber and spoke at length with the least loved founder. He was told that the Parseltounge gift was almost exclusive to Slytherin's blood-line and because of that

Salazar's portrait was willing to tell Tom how to find out if he was in fact descended from Slytherin. Tom was in fact of Slytherin's blood and Salazar told him how to bond with the Chamber. After bonding with the Chamber and awakening certain powers within his blood he then met the basilisk in the catacombs under Hogwarts."

"Tom got to know the basilisk rather well," Kira spoke into the half second silence when Harry paused. They were telling the tale back and forth while keeping up a constant mental conversation of what to speak on next. "He devised a plan to use the basilisk as the first part of his vengeance. He would send the basilisk out to kill muggle-born students and specifically Myrtle. The first few attacks resulted in petrification. The school board seriously considered shutting down the school but because no one had died Headmaster Dippet was able to prevent this for a while. Then Tom managed to kill Myrtle."

"How?" whispered Neville.

"She ran into the bathroom with the entrance to the Chamber to cry and he followed her," Harry answered. "He then summoned the basilisk and opened the hole beside the stairway. When she exited the stall the King of Serpents met her eye to eye. She died instantly."

Kira nodded, "At that point Headmaster Dippet couldn't keep the school from being closed unless the perpetrator was caught. Tom realized he was about to permanently lose his only real home if he didn't do something quickly. He decided to use Hagrid's love of dangerous beasts to frame him. Professor Dumbledore knew Hagrid wasn't guilty but couldn't prove it. He was however able to keep Hagrid from being sent to Azkaban. Father has said that's one of the few wise things Dumbledore ever did."

Harry smirked, "I remember that, anyway since Tom was the one who 'caught' Myrtle's killer, he was allowed to be present when her parents arrived at Hogwarts. They had been called to identify and make arrangements for the body. Thomas Riddle SR and his wife were told what happened and shown Myrtle's body. The response they had to the situation enraged Tom. They told Headmaster Dippet to "dispose of it" because they had no freak children. They refused to

stay in Hogwarts more than a few moments after that and it was all Tom could do not to hex them into oblivion.”

Kira shook her head, “Tom regretted his actions against Myrtle at that moment and vowed to avenge himself, his mother, and Myrtle’s childhood. He knew he had done wrong, but all that mattered was seeing proper revenge being met out to the Riddle family. He kept Vorla, the basilisk locked up the rest of the time he was at Hogwarts and studied the books in here. He kept his studies secret and made plans to travel to all the great places of power after graduation. He journeyed to the greatest nodes and performed ancient rituals. These rituals forged changes in him physical, magical, emotional, and mental. He used his name, rearranged the letters and created the persona Lord Voldemort.”

Harry wrote {Tom Marvolo Riddle} with his wand; he then rearranged the letters to read {I am Lord Voldemort}. Hermione and Neville just starred at the words before Harry waved them away. He continued, “Voldemort’s first action as a ‘dark’ wizard was to extract his revenge. He returned to the British Isles and located the Riddle mansion. He chose a lovely summer eve when the entire Riddle clan was home. Thomas and Loretta Riddle were celebrating their twenty fifth wedding anniversary. Their four children, son-in-law, and daughter-in-law were all there.”

“Voldemort used parsel-magic to ensnare everyone and hold them to their seats.” Kira took up the story again. “He then forced each of them to take Veritaserum. He asked them what they had felt and truly thought about Myrtle. Myrtle’s youngest brother Calvin was the only one who had anything good to say. Even the two in-laws had negative views on the deceased witch. Calvin told Voldemort that he had loved his sister very much and missed her deeply. He told Voldemort that he never believed his parents tales about Myrtle being evil Satan-spawn. Voldemort chose to spare him.

“The fledgling dark lord used Imperious to control Thomas senior. He forced the man to beat and kill his own family. The family died in slow agony as Voldemort told each one of them why each pain was inflicted upon them. He inflicted pain for pain every beating he had ever received at the hands of the orphanage caretaker. Finally he

released his control over his father and watched the man scream and cry over the murders he had been forced to commit. Voldemort then held the man who should have been his father in more than blood under the Crucio curse long enough for his mind to snap. The Killing curse actually ended Thomas Riddle senior's life.

"Voldemort then released Calvin from his magical bonds and told him to leave. Calvin refused to go. In spite of everything the dark lord had done, Calvin saw something in Voldemort worthwhile. Voldemort threatened to kill his muggle half-brother if the foolish boy didn't leave. Calvin passionately told him to do it because he had nothing to live for. He explained to the dark lord that Myrtle had been the only family member to matter to him. He told Voldemort that he saw some of that same dark-light inside him which he remembered Myrtle having and he refused to abandon the last family he had. His emotions so moved Voldemort that he took Calvin with him."

Harry snapped his fingers, "It was amazing for the dark lord during the next few years. His muggle half-brother showed him that there were definitely muggles worth trusting. He proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that muggles were just as resourceful, cunning, loyal, and brave as any wizard. He helped Voldemort form his early plans and goals. Voldemort wanted dark "creatures" to receive the same rights as witches and wizards. Calvin wanted muggles to know the wizarding world. Because of this Calvin began to network within the muggle world. He found many people who were more than able to understand the wizarding world and wanted to help. While he did that, Voldemort gathered followers within the wizarding world. Their plans to merge magic and muggle worlds were well underway."

"What?!" Hermione and Neville interrupted at the same time.

"Voldemort's vision is one where muggle and magic worlds coexist," Kira answered simply.

Harry nodded, "The reason Voldemort had his Death Eaters helping him take over the wizarding world is because he needed absolute control to enact the changes he desired. The wizarding world is far more adverse to change than the muggle world. Muggles understand that change is a constant and that it can be very beneficial. For some

reason most wizards loose their heads in traditions and refuse to change. They refuse to loose their prejudices and the laws reflect the worst of wizarding views. Voldemort wants equality for all sentient dark creatures as well as the non-human light creatures. We all know that Centaurs, Giants, Goblins, Werewolves, vampires and many others have virtually no rights within the wizarding world. In fact if a witch claims that such a creature harmed her, the Department for Control and Removal of Dangerous creatures steps in to kill the 'creature' without even a trial to prove he may be innocent. More than one innocent non-human has been executed for no other reason than some witch or wizard didn't like them and lied to the ministry."

"You mean Vo... Vol... um... you-know-who wants to revolutionize the world not destroy it the way the ministry believes?" asked Hermione.

"Yes," replied Kira. "Father had a vision to reform the world, but the means he chose to use were flawed. He learned just how flawed after he met Mother."

Harry smirked in memory and continued the story, "Mother was attending Hogwarts around the same time as Professor Snape. She was a muggle born witch with vision, passion, and a brilliant mind. She met Father during the summer before her fifth year. They met because he had targeted a muggle in her area to be killed. This muggle was a militant who had discovered the wizarding world and responded badly to the discovery. He had decided to make war on the wizarding world and had already managed to kill one muggle-born child without getting caught. The day Voldemort went after him was the same day the muggle had caught Mother unaware. The muggle was beating her into a right bloody mess when Voldemort arrived. Incensed at the actions of the muggle he used Crucio to stop the muggle and then the killing curse to end his miserable life. He then healed Mother.

"Mom was shocked to learn her rescuer was Lord Voldemort, but she stayed and listened to him. They started a correspondence and slowly became friends. He began to ask her for ideas on how to deal with certain problems within his ranks and also ideas for dealing effectively with the ministry. She brilliantly came up with uses for his muggle-hating fanatics. She told him to use them in endeavors that

were likely to be caught by the ministry and also as distractions when he had bigger goals in mind. She also suggested a more subtle approach to conquering the wizarding world. He began to spend his least desirable followers without remorse. Those are the ranks who wound up in Azkaban or dead in fruitless raids.”

“Before long Mother and her closest friends became closer than family to Voldemort,” Kira said. “He didn’t mark them and he never asked them to Death Eater meetings. He kept them his secret because Mother suggested a perfect way to help him in the war. She and the other friends all joined the Order of the Phoenix. Dumbledore never suspected anything because none of them were marked and also because mother was muggle-born. Mother and Father were married in secret and only Calvin and her closest friends knew about it.

“Mother and Father are both brilliant and they began working on a way to extend magic into the muggle world. They created a series of potions which opened the channels for magic within children, so long as it was taken before conception. The potion was designed such that muggle parents could have wizarding children and wizards and witches could ensure that no squibs would be born. During their research they discovered a potion which would allow Voldemort to impregnate her when they were ready. Because Voldemort had undergone some truly powerful changes, he was sterile. The potion Mother and he found had to be imbibed by both parents. Mother left the Order of the Phoenix as soon as she knew she was pregnant.

“They took the potion and mother became pregnant. She had also taken the potion to ensure magical children a year or more before this. The combination of the two potions caused abnormal dark magics to invade her womb and change the fetus. A combination of Voldemort’s changes, extra boosting from the potions, and Mother’s own uniqueness caused me to be born with dark blood. The dark blood causes changes in my magics every time I undergo extreme magical stress. The only thing that stabilizes those powers is blood, tears or venom from various magical creatures. The dark creatures respond to my changes and seem to know when to come to my aid. That was why a Dementor showed up yesterday. Its blood combined with

threshold potions stabilized my magic. Actually performing minor magic caused the stabilizing to be complete.”

“Enough about you,” Harry interrupted, “on with what they really want to know. As Kira said, Mother and Father created potions which ensure magical children. Calvin found a number of muggle couples who thought the idea of magical children to be fantastic. They took the potions and because of that there will be a large number of muggle-born witches and wizards in the next generation. The wizarding children of Voldemort’s most trusted Death Eaters are also more powerful. Couples such as the Malfoys, Zabini, and Lestranges all took the potions to ensure magical children. Because of this Draco, Blaise and their siblings are more powerful than normal.

“The children who were conceived with the potions are going to be the next leaders of the wizarding world. Voldemort wants his revolution to commence as soon as possible, but with a minimum amount of blood shed. The ranks that escaped Azkaban after he “fell” are the ones who can help actualize his vision rather than taint the future into something vile. The potion enhanced children will actually make future generations stronger because the magic in their blood is more pure, not light, just undiluted. If the revolution happens on schedule, our generation, and those who come after, will not have to live hidden from the world.”

“And that is our story,” concluded Kira as Harry finished speaking.

Hermione looked from one to the other, “So let me get this straight... You-know-who is a half-blood married to a muggle-born and he doesn’t hate muggles? Not only that, but he has a muggle half-brother? In addition to this strangeness, he also wants to revolutionize the world such that muggle and magic are the same and that dark creatures have the same rights as witches and wizards? Am I missing anything?”

“Nope, that about covers it,” commented Draco in his naturally sarcastic voice. The other three serpents smirked along with Draco.

“So what are we to believe about you-know-who?” asked Neville. “We have been told all of our lives that he and his Death Eaters want nothing more than world domination while ‘cleansing’ the impurity of

muggles and muggle-born. We have been told he loves to torture, rape and kill. We have 'known' our lives were meaningless to him and that he would kill us simply for not agreeing with his world view. We were told he consorts with vampires and werewolves and gives victims to them. We were painted a monster with no remorse, no heart, and no soul. You are telling us that portrait is false. You are telling us that he is not a monster. So what should we believe? Should we trust our society or you? Should we believe your word or everything we have 'known' as truth all our lives?"

"Believe what you feel in your heart and soul to be truth, Mr. Longbottom," said a deep resounding voice from behind the two Gryffindors.

All six children turned their attention toward the voice. They saw a man who looked to be in his early fifties with salted ebony hair and eyes the color of the morning sky. His still handsome face held the years well and the slight tan made him appear younger. He stood at a regal six feet seven inches. His bearing was that of a man used to command, but his clothing seemed to contradict the image. He was wearing black jeans, dark gray belt, leather boots and a dark green Black Sabbath t-shirt.

The heirs hadn't realized he had arrived because they were caught up in telling the tale. Seeing him they jumped from the couches and exclaimed, "Father," as they ran to his outstretched arms. He hugged them tightly and when they pulled away Kira said, "I can't believe you're wearing it."

Lord Voldemort smiled as said, "And why would I not wear it?"

Harry replied, "Because you are the feared Dark Lord Voldemort," in a mocking voice. Blaise and Draco chuckled at the family antics they were quite used to. Neville and Hermione just stared with slack jaws and buggy eyes; confusion was their middle name.

Voldemort said, "But they're my all time favorite muggle band, and this was a gift from you two, my little monsters." He pouted slightly, mocking himself as he only did with family.

Kira and Harry burst into laughter while Blaise and Draco's chuckles also became full fledged hearty laughter. Tom Riddle shook his head slightly and muttered, "No respect." He walked over to the couches. He looked at Hermione and Neville. He gave them a gentle smile, one reserved for friends and family.

"Are you really you-know-who?" asked Hermione.

"Yes Ms. Ganger, I am Lord Voldemort." His smile faltered when she flinched at the sound of his name. "There is no reason to fear my name," he said softly, "all it is, is a name."

"Designed to instill fear," interjected Blaise.

"And force the world to sit up and take note of you," added Draco. The heirs snickered.

Voldemort raised an eyebrow at them, "But not a name for family or friends to fear." He turned to look at the two lions again, "And from what Kira and Harry have written about you both, I believe you fall into the category of friend."

Neville blushed and looked down. Hermione said, "So you consider a muggle-born Gryffindor worthy of being your daughter's friend?"

Voldemort nodded, "You are not only worthy, you are a friend to my children."

Hermione blushed slightly. Neville looked up and said in a quiet almost whisper, "What about a Gryffindor whose family is fiercely opposed to you? My parents were in the Order of the Phoenix."

"You are a friend to my children and therefore my family. I respected your parents during the first war and consider your friendship with my children a good thing."

"You respected my parents?"

"Yes, they fought with honor for what they believed. They were formidable people and the tragedy which sent them to St. Mungo's

Hospital was horrible. If there is ever any way you think my family can help, just ask.”

“Thank you.”

“Do you know what Kira and Harry just told us?” asked Hermione.

“Yes I was listening to the entire story.”

“So is that how it happened?” she persisted.

“Yes, I originally became Lord Voldemort because of my bitterness and resentment for my father. But there is more to being a dark lord than just a thirst for vengeance. I am a true dark lord in the sense that I have the best interests of the dark at heart. That includes vampires and other dark creatures. That is the reason they support me, where as they have never supported another dark lord in the past. A dark lord is not evil with plans of world destruction. A true dark lord is one who understands the need for light, yet fully embraces the ideals of dark magic.

“What my children left out is the full impact knowing dark creatures had on me. I saw the wrongness inherent in the way the wizarding world treated sentient dark creatures. One of the most intriguing individuals I have ever had the honor of knowing was Jonas Mortigern.” Neville gasped in surprised recognition. “I see you know the name. The Mortigern family is an ancient vampiric family and Jonas is the heir of the family. He had always desired to be a teacher and when he attempted to procure a position within the wizarding world he was shunned. His intelligence was scoffed at and he was not given any respect. Because of mine and Calvin’s help he now has a job teaching philosophy at a muggle university. He has assimilated very well in muggle society and wishes wizarding society was as open to those different from themselves. Knowing him as I do, as well as knowing many others, I seek to undo the injustices our society lays at the feet of non-humans. Most non-humans are classified as dark creatures when in reality most of them are kinder than your average light wizard.”

“Isn’t there a danger he’ll harm the students?” asked Hermione.

“No, born vampires, which is what Jonas is, only need blood when they have used their vampiric powers. Their magic works just like ours and until a certain age the sun isn’t more than a slight annoyance. Only made vampires, who are not bound to born vampires, require regular infusions of blood. Because of the Vampiric Covenant there are only a handful of un-bound made vampires and they obey the rules of the Covenant and don’t harm humans. The Covenant rules allow for execution of vampires who harm humans.”

“Wow...”

“Do you have any other questions for me?”

Hermione shook her head slightly, “Not right now.” Neville just shook his head no.

“In that case I’ll leave you students to talk while I go see an old friend.”

“See you later Dad,” said Kira as Voldemort headed into the catacombs.

“What’s he doing?” asked Hermione.

“Going to see the basilisk,” commented Draco in his most superior voice.

Neville squeaked, “Its still here?”

“Of course,” replied Blaise as though it was the most obvious thing in the world.

“Yeah, basilisks are basically immortal serpents,” added Harry.

“It won’t hurt us will it?” asked Hermione.

“No,” responded Kira.

“It never comes into the chamber; it stays in the catacombs,” added Draco.

“She is a very kind basilisk. Salazar Slytherin asked her to be part of Hogwarts’ defenses back in the beginning. She was to be a last line against anyone who got inside the castle. Every year Salazar would introduce Vorla to the new students and she would remember their scents. If an intruder managed to get past the wards, Salazar would release her to hunt them down. She knew the scents of teachers and students; therefore she would only petrify those she didn’t know,” Harry informed the two lions.

“Amazing, so does she know your scents?” Hermione asked Blaise, Draco, and Harry.

All three nodded. Kira then said, "After Father goes back home, we can introduce you both to Vorla. That way she will know your scents and never harm you."

“Okay,” replied Hermione. Neville nodded his head slightly.

The six youths began to talk about classes and who was a git. Before long they realized they had conversed through lunch time. They laughed and decided to go raid the kitchens. Kira went out to the catacombs and let Voldemort know they were going. They then used the Slytherin passage to head to the dungeons. The six youths enjoyed their time in the kitchens.

[illegible][illegible]

Review responses:

Shadowface I don't know how, but you reviewed twice for chapter seven... so thank you doubly so.

Slacker1 I'm glad you like the plot thus far.

I feel Neville is an under-portrayed character and figured he'd be a nice convert from the light. As for Hermione, I like her and think she's a great character.

Ron in cannon is a prat... almost all of book four pretty much if you need an example... he goes out of his way in this AU because without Harry and Hermione to temper his own version of bigotry he is not a very tolerant or forgiving person.

These AU's intend to parallel the books... that's part of the reason Harry is a seeker... as for a reason in this AU, it is there, but in case you haven't noticed my style drops hints, but doesn't really give the full picture... take last chapter, did I tell you who Mrs. Riddle was... and while this chapter reveals a lot it also doesn't tell you everything.

The reason why Harry made seeker is simple, Marcus saw him catch Neville's Remembrall when Ron threw it and then saw him fly. Slytherins are too intelligent to pass up talent that could lead them to victory.

Kira does overshadow Harry somewhat, but that is because she IS the Dark Lord's daughter. Slytherins loyal to Voldemort are more likely to look at his blood than his proclaimed heir whom everyone knows defeated him briefly as an infant. She doesn't tell Harry what to do, she suggests things and sometimes, like with the law, she knows more. She is a constant source of comfort and support in his life, something cannon Harry never had. I apologize if she is coming off as a Mary-Sue at this point, but this story is about both of them, it is the "Dark Heirs" after all.

Thank you for your review, I try to take criticism to heart and improve based on what others say, I don't always succeed.

Kage Mirai Glad you agree that thorns keep you on your feet.

Thank you for being such a constant encouragement.

Chapter 9

Halloween Fun

In the following weeks the rest of the school let the rumors about Kira die down somewhat. Ron Weasley tried to get back at the quartet, but was unable to prove they had done the prank. His feeble attempts at pranking them back were abysmal. The twins couldn't even seem to help too much. Nothing magical went unnoticed by the heirs and so most of the twin's pranking arsenal was ineffective.

Harry found quidditch practice to be quite rigorous and satisfying. He was still using a school broom in practice and was still beating Terrance Higgs to the snitch nine out of ten practices. Marcus Flint told Harry that he would fly as first string seeker so long as he got his broom before the first game. Harry felt sorry for Higgs, but the Slytherin way did not allow sympathy to get in the way of a win.

Neville and Hermione were semi-adopted by house Slytherin. Even Professor Snape left them out of the disparaging comments he directed toward Gryffindors. The rest of Gryffindor house seemed set on alienating the two wayward lions, whom Ron dubbed traitors. This caused the quartet and by extension the other first year snakes to watch out for the two lions. At meal times the two Gryffindors could be seen sitting with the quartet in the heart of snake territory more often than they sat with their own house.

The month of October came swiftly, punctuated by bouts of intense chill and heralded by the addition of seasonal decorations. The quartet decided a prank was appropriate to get into the season the day before Halloween. After carefully researching the illusion spells they wanted, they designed a number of creatures to instill fear, especially in the muggle-born. They settled for images of Freddy Kruger, Jason from the Halloween movies, and a couple aliens from the Alien movies as a start to the terror. Then a pack of werewolves would appear as a full moon lit up in the sky/ceiling. Following that a dozen or so vampires would invade the Great Hall. The final touch would be the gruesome image of the dark lord Grindelwald, covered in blood, riding through the hall on a thestral.

On October twenty-ninth Harry, Kira, Blaise, and Draco snuck into the Great Hall under invisibility cloaks and parsel-spells of invisibility. They set the illusion charms up and keyed them to be activated with a simple word spoken in Parseltounge. The illusions were set in locations that would instill the most fear possible. The muggle villains would appear near the Gryffindor and Hufflepuff tables while the vampires and werewolves would “attack” Ravenclaw and Slytherin. Grindelwald would ride directly up the center aisle, straight at Dumbledore. Once all the illusion charms were set the dark heirs used parsel-magic to hide them from detection. Both Parselmouths and their two cohorts fell asleep with evil smirks on their faces. Tomorrow would be fun.

October thirtieth dawned clear and cold. Many students took to wearing their dragon hide gloves in order to keep their hands warm. By the time everyone had settled down for dinner it became apparent that the Weasley twins had planned a prank as well. About half the giant pumpkins transformed into cackling hags and ragged wraiths. The startled hall fell into slight laughter. Just as everyone in the hall overcame being startled, a sub-vocal hiss activated the illusions.

Suddenly a muggle-born screamed. Everyone noticed the dozens of additions almost instantly. Since all the illusions were ‘programmed’ to attack, chaos ensued. Freddy lifted his bladed hands in the air and smiled a twisted feral smile. Jason took a slow step toward the Hufflepuff who screamed, raising his machete as he did so. The aliens opened their mouths wide, the little feral alien tongues extended out of their mouths, snapping as they did so. The charmed ceiling had a huge full moon appear as a pack of eight werewolves materialized near the Slytherin table. Thirteen vampires appeared near the Ravenclaw table and moved toward the bookish students.

Prefects and some of the older students tried stunning the illusions only to have the stunners go through them. The Ravensclaws and Slytherins figured out they were illusions and started casting strong “finite incantatem”s. Only the quartet, teachers, and adopted lions noticed the cowering headmaster as ‘Grindelwald’ rode down on him. Filius Flitwick disbanded the illusory dark lord. The Gryffindor and Hufflepuff prefects noticed how easily these things actually were to

banish and soon the only decorations remaining were the normal Halloween decorations.

Albus stood. His persona took the full power of the defeater of Grindelwald, the demeanor of one of the most powerful wizards alive. His voice rang out, demanding attention, "When I find whoever cast these illusions, I guarantee their points will not only suffer tremendously, but they will be lucky to only have long and arduous detentions. If any of you know who did this please inform your head of house or myself. This prank," he spat the word prank, "is worthy of expulsion." He sat back down.

The great Hall burst into whispers. The prank, as well as Dumbledore's reaction to it, was the main topic of discussion. It was generally agreed that while quite scary the second prank hadn't hurt anyone and was in fact very much in keeping with the Halloween spirit. The Weasley twins found themselves wondering who their competition was. They were also somewhat curious about the muggle horror villains. Many purebloods received an education that night about muggle horror and sci-fi movies.

There was an air of excitement when October thirty-first dawned gray and overcast. The ominous clouds hung low over Hogwarts and promised a tremendous thunder storm that night. In spite of the chill and dreariness of the day most of the school was outside. The quartet waited out under a stand of trees near the lake for Hermione and Neville. They were not to see their adopted lions that cool afternoon in spite of the plans made the night before. Both lions were waylaid by Gryffindor prejudice before they made it as far as the meeting with the quartet.

Ron Weasley confronted Hermione granger with loud, harsh and cruel words in the middle of the common room. Hermione was unable to retort or refute his words because most of the common room agreed with him. Hermione felt agony cut into her heart deeply and she fled the tower in tears. She huddled in a stall inside a first floor girls' restroom. She spent most of the day crying. It was one thing to know a few people within your house hated you; it was another to be hated by your entire house.

Neville tried to follow her and was hexed with an immobility spell. Ron, Dean, and Seamus then proceeded to take him to the unused haunted girls' bathroom. There they put a dress on him before tying him to a stall. They left him there, with his wand just out of reach, and enjoyed a 'traitor' free day.

Late afternoon brought Pansy over to the quartet, who was just starting to worry about their friends. She said, "You might be interested to know that moaning Myrtle is cackling about a boy in drag in her bathroom. One of the Hufflepuffs said it's Longbottom. I didn't check, but I thought you might like to know." She then flounced off to rejoin Millicent. While Slytherin house had semi-adopted the two lions, they did not protect them quite as much as they protected their own. It was by unspoken agreement that the house informed the quartet of anything they found out about the two lions.

Kira looked at the other three. Without vocal prompting all four stood and strode purposefully toward the castle. Using secret passages they made their way into Myrtle's domain very quickly. Myrtle was tormenting Neville with stories of her time at school as the pudgy boy kept whispering, "Please get me help," over and over again.

Harry said, "Why Myrtle I'm wounded," he placed his hand over his heart, "I thought you liked serpents not lions."

Myrtle stopped and turned toward the quartet, "You bullies leave me alone!" She then dived into 'her' toilet.

Draco untied Neville and asked, "Who did this?"

"The weasel trio," said Neville as he sank down to the floor. He had been tied in a standing position and was exhausted.

"Don't worry," said Blaise, "we'll get them back."

"Most definitely," added Harry.

"Where's Hermione?" asked Kira.

Severus Snape sat quietly in his place at the head table. He sneered at the students boisterously enjoying their feast. He noticed the absence of six students and was somewhat surprised. His serpentine quartet and their two adopted lions were missing from the festivities. He noticed how smug the first year Weasley looked but didn't fear the boy had successfully done anything to his snakes. He unfortunately felt some concern for the two lions. He was certain his snakes would find them and turned back to Albus who was trying to engage him in conversation. That was when he noticed Quirrell was absent as well.

At the lion table Ron Weasley was enjoying his food and plotting his next 'prank' to take down Granger and Longbottom another notch. The twins heard their younger brother and decided to stay out of it. They believed in fun pranks, like Halloween, not humiliating harmful hate crimes. Percy was too far away to hear his youngest brother, but he was wondering where the fuzzy haired traitor and her sidekick were.

The snake table was just as alive as any other, but for a different reason. Pansy had informed the entire house of where the quartet was and what the lions had done to their own. A few of the older students offered to prank the weasel's gang. Pansy agreed that was a good idea, but cautioned them to wait until the heirs came to the great hall before doing so. The serpents began to weave subtle spells to torment the lions with. The raven and badger tables were much less agitated, but enjoying themselves just as much as the other two tables.

The double doors of the Great Hall burst open and a disheveled Professor Quirrell ran up the aisle between the raven and lion tables. "Troll in the dungeons, thought you'd like to know." He then promptly fainted after squeaking out the warning. Screams and chaos erupted in the hall. Severus slunk out the side door as Albus sent sparks into the air with his wand. The chaos quieted.

"Prefects lead your housemates to your dorms. Teachers come with me." He commanding presence once again reminded people why Albus Dumbledore was one of the most powerful and respected wizards alive.

However the effect was lost on the Slytherins because if they followed his orders it would lead them to their death. The Slytherins gathered around their prefects and one of them said, "Like hell we'll walk quietly to our deaths in the dungeons. Alright listen up, the troll is in our domain so we head away from there. Follow us to the astronomy tower and stick together. Move quickly now." The snakes nodded and quickly headed out of the great hall.

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Blaise and Kira entered the first floor girls' bathroom. The last stall in the far corner was closed.

“Hermione?” called out Blaise. “Are you in here?”

"Go away," came her muffled reply.

“No,” answered Kira as she walked to the closed stall. “Now come out here or I’ll open this door with parsel-magic.”

The two female snakes heard a sigh and then the bolt was unlocked. The stall door opened and Hermione glared at them. The effect was ruined by her puffy eyes, tear stained cheeks, and red nose. Kira reached out a hand and dragged the emotionally tattered lioness into her arms. Blaise enveloped both of them in a hug so that Hermione was sandwiched between the two serpents. They stood like this for a while as Hermione cried against Kira's shoulder. Soft words of comfort were all that could be heard besides the sobs.

After about an hour Blaise said angrily, "We'll teach Weasel a real lesson."

Kira added, "No one harms our friends."

Hermione whimpered, "You shouldn't do that, I'm not worth it."

Both snakes stepped back. Blaise knew Kira was about to explode. Kira gripped Hermione's shoulders and caused her sapphire orbs to glare into the other girl's light brown eyes. "You are worth it! You are our friend and a very talented witch! You are a very special person

and far better than Weasel could ever hope to be! If I EVER hear you degrade your worth again you will regret it. If I EVER hear another degrade you, they will know the pain of crossing the dark heiress. Understood?”

A shocked Hermione nodded her head. Never had anyone been so emotionally supportive nor protective of her before. Her parents had always been too busy and she had never had real friends before Neville and the quartet. Blaise said, “Good. Then you had better clean yourself up so we can join the boys in the clubhouse for our mini Halloween feast.”

Hermione smiled tentatively and moved to the sink to wash her face. As she did so, Blaise told her about the ‘prank’ Weasel’s trio played on Neville. All three froze as the stonework shook and a disgusting scent reached their noses. All three drew their wands as the door flew into the bathroom. The highland troll who entered looked around.

The three girls’ eyes widened. They seemed frozen. Blaise whispered, “Oh shit!”

Hermione whimpered.

Kira sent a thought to Harry *A fucking troll just entered the bathroom. Hurry and help us.* She then said out loud, “Split up and we’ll try to stun it together. Let me be its focus.”

The troll swung its club at them as the girls dodged in every direction. Kira stayed in front of it so Hermione and Blaise could flank it. It grunted angrily and swung again at Kira. The martial artist youth used a sink to leap away from its attack. The sink was smashed and a spray of water erupted from the broken pipes. “Stun it!” commanded Kira as she dodged again.

Blaise lifted her wand, as did Hermione. “On three,” said Blaise, “One, two, three, Stupefy!” Hermione’s voice joined hers. The two streams of red light hit the troll.

It shook its head in confusion, but before it could continue to react Kira hissed **Desist breath Induce Death**. The troll dropped its club. It

clutched at its throat and fell heavily to its knees. It completed its fall, gasping and twitching in a vane attempt to breath.

Professors McGonagall, Snape, and Dumbledore entered as the troll twitched its last moment of life. The three professors looked at the three students. "Why did you disobey?" asked Dumbledore.

"Disobey what headmaster?" asked Kira.

"I told you to return to your common rooms with your prefects," he responded.

Severus Snape glanced at Albus. *Is he mad? The troll was supposedly in the dungeons. If my Slytherins were stupid enough to obey that would have gotten them killed. Plus how were these three to know anything when they weren't at the feast. I wonder where Potter, Malfoy and Longbottom are.*

"How were we supposed to know that when we never went to the feast?" asked Kira. "We've been here the last hour, comforting a friend because of the prejudices of her housemates."

Minerva looked scandalized. Severus asked, "And why were your three male cohorts not at the feast either?" He spoke before Minerva or Albus could say anything more.

"They were waiting in the common room," responded Kira. *Brother, do not come to the bathroom. The professors are here. Meet us in the Slytherin common room.*

Sure thing sis he thought back.

Professor Quirrell entered then and fell to the ground grasping his heart. Albus asked, "Is it dead?" Quirrell nodded his eyes wide with fear. He didn't need to look at the dark heiress to know she had killed it. He just wondered how. Albus wondered the same and almost gleefully commanded the three students, "Present you wands." Albus then used "prior incantato" to reveal the last spells cast. They were 'stupefy' 'stupefy' and 'finite incantatem'.

"How did it die?" asked Albus. Quirrell, Minerva and Severus all wondered the same. Albus was looking directly at Kira as he asked his question.

She smiled, "Not by an unforgivable."

"I require an answer," Albus ground out in frustrated anger. Minerva couldn't remember him ever using that tone with anyone. Quirrell wondered at his anger. Severus was displeased with his tone directed toward one of his Slytherins, especially since she was the dark lord's daughter.

Hermione said, "She used parsel-magic and if she hadn't we would be dead right now." The young muggle-born saw in that moment the desperate man Blaise had mentioned those weeks ago in the chamber. She realized in that moment that Dumbledore was not the pure light wizard everyone made him out to be. Some of her innocence was lost in that moment of clarity.

Albus suddenly seemed to notice the presence of Hermione as well as his professors. He replaced his grandfatherly affectation. Wandless magic flooded the room, subtle manipulative magic. Kira hissed through closed lips and dispelled what tried to touch Snape, Granger, Zabini, and herself. The old headmaster said, "I see, five points Ms. Riddle for dispatching the troll and an additional five points to each of you for supporting your friend. Now Severus, Minerva please escort these students to their common rooms."

"Can Hermione join us in the Slytherin common room?" asked Blaise in her most pleadingly sweet voice.

"If professor McGonagall agrees, I have no objections," replied Severus. He had been expecting the request and was glad his students didn't disappoint him.

Albus frowned as Minerva said, "No go right ahead professor Snape."

"This way," said Severus as he swept from the bathroom. The other professors were left to clean up the mess made by the troll. A few steps out of the room Severus began to limp slightly.

“Professor, are you okay?” asked Kira.

“Yes Ms Riddle,” he replied without turning around.

“What happened to your leg?” asked Hermione, using her Gryffindor lack of tact.

He spun angrily but before he could retort Kira said, “Please forgive Hermione’s lack of tact Professor. Perhaps you would allow me to heal your wound?”

He scowled, “And how exactly would you heal anything when you are only a first year student?”

Leg wound heal without infection. Cause this now at my direction. Kira hissed and waved her hand at his wounded leg.

Severus felt the warmth, itching, tingling, and slight pain of healing. He looked down and saw his now unmarred leg through his torn pant leg. The skin was pink but otherwise there was no evidence of the horrible bite wound. He was amazed. He looked back up at Kira.

“That’s how,” said Kira cheekily and then walked past him. She continued toward the dungeons while Hermione and Blaise fell quietly in step beside her. Blaise was doing everything she could not to laugh; she had never seen Snape so flabbergasted. Hermione was still attempting to process the look of absolute shock she had seen on Snape’s face; her mind just couldn’t grasp the concept of that facial expression on the man who only knew how to scowl.

Severus gathered his wits and followed. He couldn’t recall a time when his masks had fallen so completely. His amazement at her abilities doubled and he vowed to keep a closer eye on the dark heiress; he intended never to be surprised by her again. As the four people arrived at the Slytherin entrance, Severus wondered how Kira was going to keep the password a secret from Hermione. She answered that when she hissed at the snake carving.

Kira hissed **Godric Gryffindor is a moronic password.** The snake carving hissed back **I fully agree heir, enter.** The three girls entered; Severus followed. Inside the Slytherins only paused enough to notice

who had entered and then returned to their party. Severus noticed the Butterbeer, but chose to not notice.

Harry called, "Over here," from one of the corners. The three girls headed toward the three boys waiting for them.

Severus said, “Ms. Riddle, I will speak with Professor McGonagall about Mr. Longbottom and Ms. Granger staying here the night. I will inform you of what she says shortly.”

Kira nodded, "Thank you, professor." Both knew he would never thank her for healing his leg, but he was showing his gratitude with this gesture.

Severus strode from the room and the quartet gathered with their two lions for an evening of fun. The rest of Slytherin house decided that night that Hermione and Neville were serpents from that day forward. As a house rule only those worthy of the house of snakes ever entered the common room. The heirs clearly felt the two lions worthy and the others had observed enough to agree. Severus returned about a half an hour after he had first left. He informed the six students that the two lions could stay the night. That night Hermione and Neville learned what it meant to be Slytherin.

[illegible]

Review responses:

Shadowface Thank you and hope this was soon enough.

Jadzania Voldemort did kill quiet a few people, and he caused a lot of other deaths then those by his hands (including the deliberate deaths of some of his death eaters). The heirs admitted that he had flawed methods in the beginning. He doesn't want what's best for "everyone"; he wants what's best for the DARK (the creatures as well as practitioners of dark magic) His current methods will be much less bloody, but when has any human revolution been bloodless. As for Dumbledore supporting a joining of muggle and magic worlds, yes he

probably would, but he would not allow the DARK to have equality. Dumbledore is one of those people who ascribes to the DARKEVIL.

tori Sirius is mentioned in the first chapter and again by Dumbledore later on. I will tell you this he won't show up until much later in this fic; but there will be more in the subsequent installments. He will forever be a marauder at heart. Thanks for the 3 reviews.

Miss Lesley Thank you. I am doing my best to update rapidly, but as I've said I'm an abysmal typist.

I'm glad you don't think Kira's a Mary Sue; I'm trying to avoid that.

Harry's story is something that will be revealed in time, once trust is complete.

The six will do great things eventually. There is much more to Neville in this fic(once other years are done) than he has been in cannonâ including an eventual relation with a Slytherin (smiles) but I'm not telling who

Draco and Blaise never took muggle martial arts; they were much more immersed in the wizarding world than the heirs. The heirs also have come to love the peace and control martial arts give them; as yet Blaise and Draco have not experienced that. I may have them take up the martial arts in the future, I don't know.

Kage Mirai Thank you very much. Here's more.

Ciara Thank you. As I've said this is a very convoluted story once it is all revealed. I have read both types of story and have enjoyed them enough to try my hand at something similar, just with my insanity mixed in. I made Myrtle his sister as one of many major deviations from cannon and the fact that he was able to feel the need to avenge another led to eventually him being able to regret(some things/ not much) Also Tom fell in love, that will ground a person's insanity quite well if the other is sane. You'll see more when I get to Yule/Christmas break. As to sending howlersâ he'll probably leave that to their mother, after all only Slytherin and the two adopted lions know who Kira's father is.

Chapter 10

Quidditch

The first quidditch game of the season was Slytherin versus Gryffindor on the second weekend in November. The week before the match Marcus Flint impatiently asked Harry when his broom would arrive. Harry told him it would arrive in time for the game. The Friday before the game arrived four eagle owls flew in carrying a long package toward the Slytherin table. They landed between the between the quartet and their two lions.

Kira smiled and helped Harry untie the owls from the package. Harry took the note and read it out loud, "Harry, use this well and bring victory to Slytherin, your father and mother."

The owls flew off and the six students tore the paper away to reveal a nimbus 2000. Neville said, "Wicked, this is the top of the line broom on the market."

"I know," Harry breathed in surprise. *I was expecting father to send one of our shooting stars.*

Kira nodded. Marcus Flint called, "Potter, make sure you get a feel for that broom by Sunday!" The entire table was quite excited about Harry and his broom. A nimbus 2000 almost guaranteed Slytherin victory on Sunday.

Harry called back down the table, "Sure thing."

Kira sighed, "Do you think I can convince father to buy me one if I make next year's team?"

Blaise and Draco hid their snickers, only every once in awhile would Kira get jealous of Harry. If it had to do with quidditch it happened more often. Both heirs loved the sport and could play every position very well. Harry was a top notch seeker and Kira was the best chaser Blaise or Draco had ever seen.

"If you make next year's team, I guarantee they will buy you a new broom," Harry said reassuringly. He knew it wasn't so much the new

broom, but rather the fact that she had to wait a year to play for the house team. He remembered the quartet's plan to join the team together their second year, he wound up on the team early, but that didn't mean they couldn't be on the team together next year.

“Wonderful,” she said brightly, “why don’t you go practice after History, before Transfiguration?”

“I think I will and I would love for all of you to come with me,” Harry said as he included the two lions in his invitation. The five students nodded to him.

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During every free period of the day Harry went out to the quidditch pitch to fly. He instantly noticed the superior handling of the nimbus compared to his shooting star. During the forty or so minutes between History and Transfiguration, Harry practiced chasing and catching the snitch only. After Transfiguration Harry chased the snitch while Blaise and Draco whacked Bludgers at him. Kira raided the kitchen and the quartet ate a quick lunch before potions.

That evening Harry flew against Terrence Higgs in practice. Marcus told them that whoever was able to catch the snitch fastest and the most times that night would fly first string on Sunday. Wilhelm Bole was told to send Bludgers at Harry during practice while Zachary Derrick was to send Bludgers at Terrence. Practice was intense as Flint, Montague, and Warrington all bore down on Bletchy as he defended the goal without the aid of beaters. Harry and Terrence zoomed around the pitch, avoiding Bludgers and searching for the snitch. Thrice Harry maneuvered himself so that the Bludger flew past and hit the chaser with the Quaffle. He also caught the snitch seven times compared to Terrence's once. Marcus told Terrence he was back up seeker. The seventh year shook his head but acquiesced because he understood the Slytherin way.

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Saturday morning found Kira and Harry sparring in the Chamber of Secrets. They had decided the night before to spend most of the day in the chamber, since there was no practice due to Gryffindor having the pitch all day. The quartet and adopted lions snuck up to the kitchens, using the Hufflepuff passage, for breakfast and lunch. Marcus Flint had agreed with Harry that he should stay out of sight for the day. They didn't want to give a chance to the Gryffindors to sabotage the youngest seeker in a century.

Blaise and Draco watched the heirs spar, remembering a time when their skill had been needed. */The four wizarding children were enjoying the bright summer sun at a nearby muggle park. A boy about two years older than them and his baby sister waved to them. Blaise and Draco were surprised when the heirs called out, "Hi Brandon! Hi Loretta!" Brandon and Loretta joined them on the swings. For a time the six kids just had fun. This was the first time Blaise and Draco had the opportunity to interact with muggles and it was a pleasant experience. The pleasantness was soon shattered as a loud rude voice called out. "Hey infants get off the swing!" The voice belonged to a boy of about thirteen years with short black hair and brown eyes. He was standing with four other boys who were about the same age. Brandon stood up and said, "Go away we were here first." "Oh yeah?" said the black haired boy. He then punched Brandon. Blaise and Draco both reached for their practice wands while Loretta cried, "Leave him alone." The heirs didn't grab wands or say anything. Instead they leapt from their swings and began punching, kicking and elbowing the older boys. The heirs were quite talented even then because they were able to incapacitate all five boys rather easily./*

Hermione and Neville had never witnessed the heirs and their martial arts. To say they were impressed would be an understatement. Hermione told them their moves reminded her of a movie and soon the topic of different movies came up. The six youths hung out, studied, and talked about all sorts of subjects as the day progressed. They headed up to dinner later that evening. They were pleased to discover that the serpent house had kept quiet about the whereabouts of the six first years.

The dark heirs invoked their mystic sight as they joined their housemates. They told the rest of the table to avoid eating the mashed potatoes and drinking the pumpkin juice because both were laced with laxative potions. Flint nodded to them and soon the entire team was safe from attempted sabotage. After a surprisingly uneventful dinner both Slytherin and Gryffindor teams retired early. The Gryffindor beaters were trying to figure out how their 'prank' had been unsuccessful. They knew at least half of the snakes had taken mashed potatoes and pumpkin juice, yet none of them had run out with the shits.

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Sunday morning dawned clear, bright and cold. Harry and Kira were up before the sun sparring and then Harry sat to meditate until breakfast. He ate lightly, but very health conscious. The team left breakfast slightly early and he headed to the locker rooms with them. In the locker rooms Flint gave his threatening speech and told everyone to remember the Slytherin way... We win no matter what!

The entire school turned out for the first game in spite of the chill. Surprisingly there were a few guests. Severus greeted Jasmine and Peter Pettigrew with a nod as they entered the teacher box. Peter just nodded in return. The weakest marauder had always been intimidated by Snape. Jasmine simply smiled and then sat down with her husband behind her former colleague and directly in front of her replacement.

Lucius Malfoy entered the box a moment later and smirked at Severus. He strode to his former housemate and said, "Why, hello Severus, it is quite good to see you so well after all these years."

“Thank you Lucius,” replied Severus silkily as Lucius sat down. “It has been entirely too long a time since last we enjoyed a quidditch game together. How are Narcissa and Selene?”

“They are both well. How are Draco, Blaise, Harry and Kira faring?”

“All four students are doing remarkably well,” Severus said as he raised an eyebrow. “As you can see Mr. Potter is doing better than well, he is the youngest seeker in a century.”

“I will have to congratulate him on his position; I know how badly he wanted to join the team next year.”

“I will escort you to the Slytherin common room to speak with him and your son after the game should we miss speaking on the pitch.”

“That would be most helpful Severus.”

Further conversation was cut off as Lee Jordan’s voice filled the stands. “Welcome to the first Quidditch game of the season. Today’s match is Gryffindor verses Slytherin. And now for the Gryffindor team Wood, Weasley, Weasley, Johnson, Spinnet, Bell and this year’s seeker Harris.” Three fourths of the stands clapped and cheered. The last quarter booed. “This year’s Slytherin team has Bletchly, Bole, Derrick, Flint, Warrington, Montague, and the youngest seeker in a century Harry Potter.” The serpent house erupted in cheers. The combined boos from the other three houses wasn’t enough to drown their excitement.

Both teams circled around the pitch once before landing on opposite sides of Madame Hooch. She said, “I want a clean game gentlemen, ladies. Wood, Flint shake hands.” The two captains shook hands. It was a minor contest of strength. The twelve youths then began to hover in air. “Release the snitch,” commanded Madame Hooch. Harry and Daniel Harris watched the little golden ball fly off. “Release the Bludgers on my first whistle; I’ll release the Quaffle on the second.” She blew her whistle once and the Bludgers flew toward the center of the field. She threw the Quaffle up as she blew her whistle again.

Both teams instantly went into action. Alicia Spinnet grabbed the Quaffle first. Lee’s voice began to call out the moves of each team. The game began in earnest, with the Gryffindor chasers quickly taking control of the game. They had three goals before Slytherin made its first goal.

Harry flew high and began to search for the snitch. About fifteen minutes into the game he heard Lee Jordan say, "Flint scores bringing Slytherin up thirty to Gryffindor's seventy."

Harry spotted a glint of gold near the base of the Hufflepuff stands and dove for it. He sensed a curse moments before it latched onto his broom. Suddenly he was jerked out of his dive. His broom bucked and spun. He gripped the broom tightly and thought *Kira, someone is cursing my broom! Help me!*

While he struggled to maintain his grip he heard her respond *I'm tracing the spell now.* In the Slytherin stands Kira invoked her mystic sight and looked at Harry's broom. She witnessed two new spells, light violet, begin to wrestle with the dark muddied crimson of the curse. All three strands lead back to the teachers' stand. The curse was directly linked to Professor Quirrell while Professor Snape and Uncle Lucius were countering it. Kira noticed Peter and Jasmine sitting just behind them.

Severus and Lucius recognized the effects of a curse as soon as Harry's broom jerked. Lucius acted a second before Severus in chanting a counter curse. Lucius was furious at the audacity of whoever was cursing the broom. Severus was terrified; he remembered the dark lord's warning well and did not intend to fail in protecting Potter. Peter and Jasmine noticed Malfoy and Snape's chant. Jasmine quickly identified it as a counter curse. Peter looked across the pitch and somehow felt drawn to the blue eyes of the dark heiress.

Hermione gripped Neville's arm, "We have to help him."

Neville squeaked, "How?"

"Find out who is cursing his broom." Both Gryffindors searched the stands. They weren't the only ones looking for the source of the curse from the Gryffindor stands.

Lee Jordan's voice rang out, "Potter loses control of his broom, well that's what happens when a first year plays out of his league."

Kira focused all her mental will on sending a concise thought to Peter's mind. She felt a minor connection form and forced the thought to transmit. *Distract the turban wearing professor behind you.*

Peter felt pressure in his mind. Just as it became unbearable the voice of the dark heiress invaded his mind with a clear directive. He glanced back at Quirrell and saw the concentration etched in the man's face. He was staring unblinkingly at Harry. He pointed his wand at the man's robes and whispered, "Incendio." The blue flames danced up Quirrell's robe causing the man to jump up in panic.

The moment his concentration was broken, Malfoy and Snape's counter curse broke the spell. There was momentary confusion in the teachers' box as Quirrell stamped out the flames. Harry's broom plummeted four meters before he regained control. During his decent he spotted the snitch.

The broom easily enter a controlled dive as Harry pursued the snitch. It was hovering near the Gryffindor goalposts. Daniel saw what he was going after and took chase from halfway across the pitch. Lee's voice called out, "Potter has spotted the snitch. Come on Harris; beat that slimy snake to the snitch."

"Mr. Jordan," said Professor McGonagall.

"Sorry professor, Potter has the lead on Harris. The snitch has both seekers climbing. Come on Harris!"

Harry concentrated on the fluttering golden ball. He remembered the first time he beat his uncle in a one on one snitch game. He remembered the exhilaration and pride. The snitch zoomed down and Harry followed. He skimmed the ground and reached out both hands as his legs guided the broom. The snitch fluttered as his hands trapped it. He acrobatically rolled off his broom, using his martial arts training to flow with the fall. He flipped up from his fall and held the snitch up high for all to see.

"Slytherin wins 230-70, hey when did Slytherin score more goals?"

The Slytherin stands went wild. The house of serpents boiled out of their stands and onto the pitch. They heartily began to congratulate

the team. The snitch's catch had to have been the most spectacular catch any of them had ever seen. Marcus whispered to Harry that feinting his broom was out of control was a brilliant tactic, but next time check with him first. Harry just nodded; Flint's father may be a Death Eater, but that didn't mean he could be trusted.

Severus Snape and Lucius Malfoy made their way through the throng of student bodies. The serpents moved back as they realized who was walking among them. Professor Snape leaned down a bit toward Harry and asked, "Mr. Potter may I have a word with you?"

Harry cheekily said, "Only if Hermione and Neville can join the celebration in the common room." His adrenaline was still quite high and he was speaking a bit out of character.

"They have been adopted by my house so I see no reason to prevent them from joining the celebration," Severus replied.

"Thanks Professor," he then turned toward Kira, "I'll see you later, make sure Hermione and Neville join us for the celebration." Kira nodded and Harry turned back toward Severus. "Lead the way sir."

Severus swept off the pitch, Harry followed in his wake. He was aware of Lucius walking behind him and smirked over his shoulder. The three Slytherins made their way down into the dungeons. Severus led them to his office. Harry and Lucius entered after him. Lucius closed the door and cast silencing spells about the room.

Severus looked at Harry. "Mr. Potter, what happened out there?"

Harry gave him a grim smirk, "Actually you could probably tell me better since you and uncle Lucius were casting a counter curse against Professor Quirrell's curse."

Lucius chuckled slightly, "The young lord has you there old friend. Although," he turned his gray eyes on Harry, "we didn't know Quirrell was the one casting the curse on your broom."

Harry glanced at Lucius, "Well now you do and that brings up the question of why. Why was he trying to kill me?"

"I'm afraid we do not have an answer," replied Severus.

Harry shrugged, "In that case I'll ask Blaise, Draco, Kira, Hermione, and Neville to help keep an eye on him. Maybe we can figure something out by watching him."

"Good idea Harry," said Lucius. "It is especially useful to observe your enemy if he doesn't think you are doing so. Be sure to act like none of you suspect anything." Harry nodded. "And Harry, I also wanted to congratulate you on a well played game."

"Thank you uncle Lucius," he then turned back toward Severus. "If there is nothing else sir..."

"Enjoy the party, it will after all be in your honor," said Severus in his patented sarcastic way.

Harry nodded, "Good night professor. Goodnight Uncle Lucius, I'll give your regards to Draco."

"Goodnight Harry, and thank you." replied Lucius as Harry left.

Severus glanced at his old friend after Harry left. "You seem to know Mr. Potter rather well."

"Yes I do. He and Kira spent a lot of time at the manor as they grew up. They have become as much Narcissa and my niece and nephew as Bellatrix's brood."

"I'm surprised our lord kept Potter and his own daughter a secret all these years."

Lucius raised one eyebrow elegantly, "Our Lord doesn't trust all of his Death Eaters equally. There are only a select few he trusts with the safety of his family, and we have family of our own. Surely you can understand his desire for caution."

"Of course," Severus kept his voice even, his face blank. He knew Lucius would never outright say that Voldemort suspected Severus of being a double agent, but he could easily read the veiled message.

“Well old friend, I must take my leave. Please let me know when the next Slytherin game is, perhaps Narcissa and I will come enjoy it.”

“Certainly, it has been very good seeing you again. If you wish you may use the Floo connection in my room.”

“Thank you Severus.”

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Review responses:

Shadowface Here's another... yeah I'm doing better than I planned

Jadzania You're welcome, and thanks for reviewing.

Jean-Claude Iscarot I think Hermione could have done well in Slytherin and while Neville isn't sneaky or ambitious enough(yet) that has a lot to do with who raised him. The weasel trio will get theirs, although I'm not entirely sure what to do to them (Yet) if you have any ideas send them my way... if I use them I'll give you credit .

Sirius will show up, but he's going to be kind of an enigma in this first installment of the AU world.

Kage Mirai Thank you. I like toying with the Dumbledore is an A—idea. I had a few Freddy nightmares myself when I was little so I can relate... although after watching **Freddy v Jason** I don't know if I would ever find him that terrifying again. Dumbledore is slowly but surely earning himself a very server punishment. Hope you enjoyed this update.

December Blues

Chapter 11

November gave way to December and the first snowfall of the year. End of term exams had many a student's nerves frayed. First years were the only students not overly concerned because their end of term scores wouldn't affect their final grades of the year. The worst stress was among the fifth and seventh year students. The end of the first week saw the sign up list for staying over the holiday go around to all the students. No one from Slytherin signed it. This fact caused Albus to summon Harry up to his office.

Severus escorted Mr. Potter to the Headmaster's office the first Friday evening in December. The journey from the Slytherin dorms to the office was very reminiscent of September first. Severus had been forced to admit to himself that while Harry Potter was proud, confident and stubborn; he was nothing like James Potter had been. Severus could admit within his own mind that Harry was every much not the Gryffindor his father had been; the boy was every bit the sly cunning Slytherin Severus remembered Lily to be. Severus had managed to put aside the irrational animosity he originally had toward Harry, but he still couldn't bring himself to care as much as he did for his other Slytherins.

Both serpents took the moving staircase up to Albus' office and entered after being invited. Albus gave a smile as they entered. Severus wondered why the smile felt more and more false every time he saw it. "Come in, please have a seat. Would either of you care for a lemon drop?"

Severus declined the candy as he sat on one of the two chairs across from Albus. Harry shook his head and sat in the other one. Harry was almost choking on the subtle wand-less manipulation spells being sent out by Albus. He focused all of his mental fortitude on pushing it away without performing parsel-magic. Harry silently glared at Albus and was intensely glad Draco suggested he wear his protection amulet. Albus simply smiled at the two Slytherins and popped a yellow candy into his mouth. Continuing in his entirely too cheery voice, Albus said, "Now Harry..."

Harry interrupted, "I do not believe you have earned that right, headmaster! As the head of an educational institution you are not to use any student's name in the familiar tense. In addition only family, friends, and those whom a wizard respects are permitted the honor of using the familiar with another wizard. I see no reason to deviate with that tradition for you, sir."

Severus smirked for half a second before controlling his face again. He was not surprised that Potter was aware of the wizarding tradition. Unlike muggles who used a person's 'Christian' name freely, wizards considered their first names as a private honor among those they trusted and cared about. Using another's 'Christian' name was an attack on the honor of that witch or wizard unless you were permitted to use the name. Reminding someone they were not entitled the use of the familiar name was the equivalent of a slap in the face. No one had ever insulted Albus Dumbledore in such a way previously.

It was clear to both Slytherins that Dumbledore was forcing himself to remain calm. Severus could tell by the muscle movements in his face as well as the dimming of his damned eye twinkle. Harry knew that he had struck an emotional chord because he felt the wand-less manipulations falter. He used the opportunity to his under his breath **Manipulation yield to my shield**. The hiss sounded like a sharp intake of breath.

Twenty or so seconds passed before Albus found his voice again. "I apologize Mr. Potter. As I was saying, I asked you here because I noticed you did not sign up to stay at Hogwarts for the Holiday Break. I was wondering why."

Harry reached for his sister's mind and felt her reassuring presence. He then said, "My sister and I are spending the holiday with the Malfoy family; therefore I have no reason to stay for the break."

Albus' eyes became shadowed and he said, "I'm afraid I can not allow you to leave the safety of Hogwarts for the holiday."

"What do you mean YOU can not allow me? Last time I checked, sir, you were not my guardian."

"No I'm not. Your guardian is Sirius Black and since I have not heard from him as to what you are allowed to do on holiday I am invoking the Headmaster's right listed in the charter."

What right could he possibly be talking about? wondered Severus.

"What right is that sir? And what part of the Charter is it in?" *Sis please listen in, I don't know as much about the charter as you.*

Sure.

"In the Hogwarts Charter rewrite of 1965 section 10 subsection C," Albus said as he picked up a piece of parchment and adjusted his glasses, "In the event that a student's legal guardian is unable to authorize activities and/or travels for the student the Headmaster may act as the guardian for said authorization.' It goes on in subsections D and E to explain the legal rights of the Headmaster in attempting to protect a student from an unhealthy home environment by granting temporary custody of the student to the Headmaster. But that is not what you were asking about was it?"

Damn he sure is a wily bastard thought Kira to Harry. Seconds later she thought *I wonder why Professor Snape is feeling so murderous.*

I don't know, but he does have the right to keep me here, huh?

Unfortunately.

Crap, I guess I'll give in to his will this once. Trust me, he'll regret it later.

I know and I'll help.

Harry broke the silence by saying, "I guess I'll add my name to the stay list sir. If there is nothing else, may I be excused sir?"

"Go ahead my boy. Have a pleasant evening."

Harry stood and walked out. Severus followed to ensure Harry returned safely to the dorms. He was still burning with rage as they walked from the Headmaster's office. Memories of his fourth year

do so, he did not pet the thestrals. He did however manage a smirk toward his sister in acknowledgement that they were the only ones able to see them. She nodded and sent *They are beautiful in their own way aren't they?* Harry sent a wordless agreement. The five first years got in a carriage and Harry walked back to the snow covered steps.

Harry waved as the carriage pulled away. He felt abandoned; it was an alien feeling. He didn't bother to return to the dorms. Instead he raided the kitchen and then retreated to the Chamber of Secrets. He quickly lost himself in a Parsel-book. He read for hours, sometimes hissing out loud as he was caught up in the pages. When he finally noticed his hunger a simple Tempus Spell revealed the time to be eight at night. He had spent the entire morning, afternoon, and evening in the chamber reading. He also noticed he was on the third book of an eight book series in the parsel-section of the mini-library.

He stretched, ate the snack foods he had left, and then headed into the catacombs. With Vorla's aid he searched for possible ways into the cavernous room where the philosopher stone may be. Finally he admitted that no progress would be made that night. He decided to head up to the dorms for the night. A quick check of the Marauder's Map showed Professor Snape in the common room. Harry decided to use the Slytherin passage and exit outside of the common room rather than inside the dorm. He didn't want Professor Snape to have any idea about the secret passages out of the chamber. Father wavered in his faith concerning Snape's loyalty; Harry wouldn't risk Snape discovering things too early.

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Severus Snape had watched the students leaving. Watching the pain evident in Potter, Riddle, Malfoy, and Zabini he wondered at Albus' insistence Potter stay for the holiday. He met Albus after the carriages left for Hogsmeade and was certain Potter had entered the castle. He didn't relay his concerns for the boy-who-lived. He didn't have to. Albus expressed worry about his emotional stability and asked Severus to check on the boy later that day.

Severus noticed the absence of his only Slytherin student at lunch and dinner. Albus noticed as well and asked him to check for the boy immediately after dinner. Severus stopped by the kitchens and asked for a meal with a temperature charm to be brought to the Slytherin common room. He then took a book because he had a feeling Potter would be a while returning. He waited in the common room. At some point he napped for about thirty minutes. He woke because his survival senses told him someone had just entered the room.

Severus looked up as Potter entered. The slight dust on his robes showed the boy had avoided the main of the school and probably went exploring. The look on his face was not one of surprise when he saw his head of house in the common room. The raven haired boy walked toward him and stood a few feet away. Severus could see the fatigue and loneliness in his eyes. His somewhat cold heart sympathized with the son of his hated childhood rival. For one moment that rivalry seemed completely foolish.

Severus broke the silence, "Mr. Potter, even over the holidays there is a curfew. You were to be in your dorm as of two hours ago. May I ask where you have been?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders, "Here and there, anywhere I wouldn't run into the headmaster." His voice was filled with bitter resentment and the tone belied the almost careless shrug.

Severus let the tone pass as he said, "I will not deduct points, over holiday, but if you are out past curfew again expect detentions for the rest of your break." Severus noted the slight inclination of Potter's raven haired head, indicating he'd heard. He continued, "Now since I know you skipped dinner I brought you some."

Harry could hear the concern in Snape's voice, though he doubted even Dumbledore would have noticed it. Years of dealing with the Voldemort and Lucius had taught him how to read the barest vocal inflection. "Thank you professor," Harry said as his stomach growled slightly.

Severus suppressed a smile, transforming it into a mocking smirk. "A house elf will retrieve the tray when you are finished. Have a good evening Mr. Potter."

“Goodnight sir,” replied Harry as he sat down near the tray. Severus nodded and left. Harry tucked into the meal.

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Harry amused himself the next night by taking his invisibility cloak and using the Gryffindor passage to sneak into the lion's den, known as the Gryffindor common room. He wondered briefly why Kira and he hadn't done this before in order to play pranks. Then he remembered that Hermione and Neville would be blamed for letting snakes into their dorms if they did. He looked around the entirely too bright common room. The garish yellow and red theme was a horrible eye sore.

He noticed that the only Gryffindors in residence seemed to be the Weasley boys. The stuffy prefect was in a corner reading. He didn't look engrossed in the book; he looked to be spying on the twins who were huddled in a far corner on the other end of the common room. He noticed a familiar looking parchment in the pocket of one of the twins. A quick scan with mystic sight confirmed it as a marauder's map.

So that's where the fourth one ended up. He decided that the quartet would need to spell themselves off the map as soon as the others got back. He wondered what the twins were up to and decided to listen in. He couldn't get real close because of noisy debris on the floor. He instead extended his senses and listened with the ears of a wolf. The twins were discussing a prank for the beginning of next term. He decided he would 'help' them pull it off.

At that moment Weasel walked into the room. “Hey guys,” he said to the twins.

Fred, or was it George, turned and said, "Hey yourself Ronnikins."

Ron flushed slightly. He then said, "I'm kinda bored; whatcha doing and can I help?"

George, or was it Fred, replied, "Nothing much and no, but if you're bored and can sneak past Percy you can go explore. During Holidays Filch is the only one who patrols rigorously."

"We can't help you with distracting Percy though," added Forge.

In a conspiratory whisper Gred said, "Yeah, he's on to us."

Harry smirked, moved to Percy's side and sang in Parseltounge sub-vocally. **Here comes the sandman stepping so lightly he comes along on the tips of his toes and he scatters the sand with his own little hand in the eyes of the sleepy children. 'Go to sleep my children. Close your sleepy eyes the lady Moon with watch you throughout the darkened night. Good night, sleep tight; don't let the bed bugs bite.'** He envisioned when he was very small and mother would sing the song as she used two fingers to mimic the sandman running on tip toes and then dust her fingers as if she was sprinkling sand over his face. He remembered how sleepy the song would make him and put the memory behind compelling Percy to sleep. The song was a longwinded version of parsel-magic; Harry wasn't as talented at rhyming as Kira, though his parsel-spells were just as strong.

While Harry was parsel-singing Percy to sleep Ron was sitting glumly, watching Percy. Suddenly he noticed Percy falling asleep. As the book slipped from his elder brother's hands Ron stood up and walked back to the twins. "Percy fell asleep," He whispered, "I'm going to go explore, see you later." They nodded.

Harry had moved to the entrance to wait for Ron. He was sure the weasel would provide him some entertainment, or possibly dirt to use against him. He followed Ron out of the portrait entrance quickly and silently. Ron wondered about in rather boring sections of the old school and after an hour Harry was ready to give up and return to his dorm. That was when they heard Filch's voice causing Ron to panic and run into the nearest room. It was an abandoned office. Harry ducked into the room before Ron thought to close the door. The red head dove under the desk to hide.

Harry slid behind a large free standing mirror in the corner. Filch opened the door a few moments later and peered in. His lantern cast

eerie shadows across the room. As Mrs. Norris entered the room, Harry growled deep in the back of his throat, so that the sound was out of the human hearing range. The cat backed up and Filch closed the door.

Ron moved out from under the desk. “Lumos,” he whispered. A soft light appeared at the end of his wand. He looked around and spotted the mirror Harry was hiding behind. “Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi. What’s that mean?” whispered Ron as he moved to stand before the mirror. He gazed in it and after a few moments he gasped, “I wonder if this thing shows the future. Damn I am a good looking adult.”

Harry moved from behind the mirror and looked at it. He could see how enamored with it Weasel was and internally chuckled. *The Mirror of Erised, hmm? I wonder what it's doing here. The book I read about it said it was safely locked away in the Department of Mysteries. I wonder what Dumbledore intends to do with it. I wonder what it would reveal my hearts desire to be.* He decided to look at it with mystic sight and found himself desiring to study its enchantments more. He felt it would be prudent to come back another day.

Harry quietly opened the door. He turned to check that Ron was still enamored with the mirror. *Let's hope Filch is still near.* He slammed the door close with all his might. While the sound echoed Harry took off at top speed back through the secret passages until he reached the dungeons. He collapsed in laughter in the common room. He could imagine the fear and astonishment on Weasel's face when the door slammed. He knew the echo would travel far and bring Filch running.

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The next morning Harry noticed Ron looking very sour. Yes *he got caught!* Harry then noticed Professor Snape walk past Weasel and say, “Remember six o’clock sharp. You will be cleaning cauldrons the muggle way, maybe that will teach you to obey curfew rules.” He then swept out of the Great Hall.

Harry held in his snickers and headed out. The fact that Snape had caught him was better than Harry had hoped. "Potter," called Fred, or was it George?

Harry turned to look at the twins. He could see the magical connections between them. Magical twins were a beautiful sight to behold if one could see their magic. "How did you avoid getting caught?" asked George, or was it Fred?

"What are you gentlemen talking about?" inquired Harry politely.

"We know you were following Ron last night."

"And somehow alerted Snape to his location."

"Without getting caught."

"Kira and I are going to have to try that sometime," commented Harry.

"What"

"Are"

"You"

"Talking"

"About?" they ended together.

Harry smirked, "The completing of one another's sentences. It's actually kind of cool."

"Cool?" asked Gred.

Harry nodded, "Yeah, cool."

"What do you mean cool?" asked Forge.

Harry shook his head, "It's a muggle expression that means stylish, amazing, awesome, fantastic or popular depending on what its describing."

“Wow.”

"I thought Slytherins don't know muggle stuff."

"It all depends on the Slytherin you're speaking with," answered Harry.

“Hey Gred,” he looked at his twin.

"Yes Forge," he responded with a glance at his twin.

“He’s avoided our question.”

“You’re right he has,” they both looked back at him.

Harry suppressed a smile at their antics by smirking, “You caught me, my Slytherin wiles of redirection have failed.”

“That they did.”

“Now tell us.”

“How did you?”

“Avoid getting caught?”

“By Snape.”

Harry gave them the blankest look he possessed and said, "The same way you two do; there were four marauders after all." He then left the two third year students staring after him in shock.

"I do believe we have found our competition Forge."

"I do believe you are correct Gred."

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Harry snuck out that night to satisfy his curiosity about the mirror. He found the office quickly enough and set parsel-spells to detect whenever someone came near. He stepped into the room and cast an ambient light spell which wasn't as concentrated as a lumos spell.

He stood before the mirror, so that his reflection did not appear. He then invoked mystic sight and began to study the enchantments. He was enamored with the beautiful complexity of the woven spells. He could also see the remnants of newer identification and classification spells. A few seemed to be from within the last lunar cycle.

He drew his attention away from his studies and returned his perceptions to normal. He moved to look at his reflection. His reflection looked as it always did before it shifted. He saw himself as an eighteen or nineteen year old standing to the right of Voldemort. His mother was to Voldemort's left and beside her was Kira. Behind the family were the Lestranges, Malfoys, Zabini's, and other loyal families, including his and Kira's four uncles. Also intermingled within the background of loyal Dark families were vampires, werewolves, imps, dark elves, and other dark creatures. They were standing equal to the witches and wizards around them.

Harry nodded to himself and turned from the mirror. He put his invisibility cloak back on and quietly left the room. He removed the parsel-spells and headed back toward the dungeons. He felt the mirror had been accurate in displaying his deepest desires. He wished for the dark to win the revolution and change the world. He wanted to stand tall with his family and friends as they recreated the world in a darker image.

Once back in the dorms he put his invisibility cloak away. He retrieved a small round black scrying mirror from his trunk. He then assumed a lotus position and began to gaze into the mirror. He felt his consciousness drift as he concentrated on looking through the inky surface. The black seemed to ripple with darker shadows. He felt the bond, weakened by distance flare within his mind and knew she felt him.

Harry?

Who else?

How have the last few days been?

Boring!

Sorry...

Not your fault... but I do miss you, Draco and Blaise.

I know... somehow though I don't think you strained yourself to reach me for small talk. What's going on?

You're right I wanted to talk to you for other reasons than the inane. I need you to tell father that the Mirror of Erised is here. I think Dumbledore may be planning on using it somehow. There were a bunch of identification and classification spells all over it.

I'll relay that to father.

Thanks sis. Let everyone know that I love and miss them.

I will. I think we need to sever the link now I can feel a reaction headache coming on.

So do I, goodbye then.

Bye, I'll see you when I see you

The connection faded leaving a pulsing ache in Harry's temples. He fumbled around for his bottle of Tylenol, took two pills, and then put his mirror away. He fell asleep as the headache medicine eased his pain away. That night he dreamed of the future they would build.

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Harry woke the morning of December twenty-fifth early, before the sun rose. He exercised as he did every morning and then showered. After the shower he looked around the dorm room. He face fell as he noticed the lack of gifts. The tree in the common room also had nothing under it. *Could they have forgotten to Owl my gifts?*

Feeling rather depressed Harry made his way to the Great Hall. The suits of armor were singing woefully out of tune as he walked past them. He sat down at the one table in the great hall and began to eat. He watched the Weasley boys enter a short time later. Each was

wearing a hand knitted sweater with a letter embroidered on it. He was certain George was wearing the “F” while Fred wore the “G”. He was probably correct.

Ron Weasley turned toward him and hissed quietly, “Feeling all alone snake?”

Harry glared at him but as he prepared to retort he saw Ann fly in. She was carrying a small package. He ignored Ron and held an arm out, she landed. He untied the package. He unwrapped it as Ann moved to his shoulder. Inside was a familiar white-gold ring, Voldemort's wedding band.

The wrapping had writing on the inside. It read, "The password is ANN." He smirked and picked up Voldemort's personal port-key. He reached up to Ann with the hand holding the ring. The raven clamped her beak onto the white-gold. Harry said, "Thank you for making my Christmas, Ann." He felt the tug in his navel.

The Weasleys watched in shock as Harry Potter was Port-keyed out of Hogwarts. Severus smirked slightly before schooling his features into a blank mask again. He had a feeling the dark lord would smuggle Potter out for the holiday. Albus didn't notice Severus' amusement as he growled slightly in frustrated anger. Nothing was going according to plan.

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Review responses:

Shadowface Thank you, I'm glad you like.

NatashaNiracval I probably won't redeem Ron; sorry... if you copy some that's okay, we all use everyone else's ideas to some extent when we write these fanfics.

Allyanna Well, as you saw Harry can most definitely do Parsel-magic. Suspensions are such fun, especially when you are either right or so close to the ‘truth’ that you cheer and pat yourself on the back.

Jean-Claude Iscarot Castration is a punishment not a prank... Now having them throw themselves on Snape might be very amusing... we'll see, there are very young yet for a prank like that.

I can't promise anything for year two.

Kage Mirai Thank you. Harry and Kira are young yet, so actual sever punishment will be a while in coming.

Yule Traditions

Chapter 12

Harry fell to the pushily carpeted floor of Lucius Malfoy's private study. Ann fluttered off his shoulder and transformed. Voldemort chuckled at the unflattering sight of Harry sprawled on the floor. He held out a hand to his prone son as his wife dropped his wedding band from her teeth. Harry smiled, a sweet open expression, and accepted the help up.

"Joyful Yule, son," Voldemort said.

"Happy Yule to you, Father," replied Harry. He continued as he turned toward her, "And to you Mother."

"The rest of the Family is waiting in the Hall by the tree," Mrs. Riddle said as she hugged Harry.

"Let's not keep them waiting," said Harry enthusiastically. He felt wonderful being with family for the holiday, exactly where he knew he belonged.

Voldemort led the way to the Grand Hall of Malfoy Manor. They passed by a number of paintings which smiled and wished them a Happy Yule as they passed. The portraits of the Malfoy family were just as gossipy and friendly as any other family, so long as they knew you were 'family'. The Grand Hall of Malfoy Manor was about three fourths the size of the Chamber of Secrets. The ceiling was twenty meters up and spelled to look like the Sistine Chapel. Long ago a Malfoy squib had created the "muggle" masterpiece. Unlike the real artwork, the spell had not faded over the centuries.

The large pine tree reached fifteen meters high and was lavishly decorated. A golden star shined from the tip and tiny glowing fairies danced around on the branches. Real icicles shimmered in the firelight and fairy light. There were also a number of 'muggle' ornaments adorning the branches. They had been made by the Family's children over the years, using craft kits rather than magic. The tree was a rich deep green and looked very much alive. It was in fact alive; it had been temporarily transplanted from the woods.

Under the huge tree were over a hundred gifts. Each gift box was wrapped in colorful paper and adorned with bows. Situated around the tree were couches, sporting the adults of the “Dark Family”. The children were waiting eagerly to begin their Yuletide traditions sprawled around the floor. The scene was somewhat strange to Harry because normally everyone would still be in their pajamas, and normally the Pettigrews would be there as well. He grinned in anticipation as he approached with his family.

“We have managed to rescue my son from the clutches of the vile Dumbledore,” Announced Voldemort dramatically during a moment of silence within the murmur of conversation.

The adults laughed and gave Harry welcoming smiles. The children cheered. Harry joined the other children and dropped himself gracefully between Kira and Draco. Moments later Carol-Anne LeStrange crawled into his lap and hugged him. “I missed you Harry,” she said in her innocent six year old voice.

He returned the embrace and said, “I missed you too.”

Voldemort conjured a large chair beside the tree and sat down. He looked over his closest friends and family. His voice was calm and ‘strangely’ kind, “This year our Yule traditions were thrown off because of Harry’s incarceration at Hogwarts. This means we did not have our Yule Breakfast where we appreciate what has been most important to us in the prior year. So instead we will commence with that part of our tradition before I distribute the gifts.”

The tradition of appreciation was similar to Christian giving of thanks, but the “Dark Family” did not thank any deity. Each member of the tight knit group would share what they were most grateful of and at times what personal achievement they were most proud of. The adults often spoke of their beloved partner, though at times Lucius, Rabastan, and Regulus would speak of something they had achieved for the cause. The children would usually waver between their parents, toys and siblings. The Yule traditions were uncannily touching and no one outside of the ‘family’ had ever witnessed it.

The tradition of appreciation had been started by Voldemort’s wife the year he had attacked the Potters. She had nursed a very ill Harry

Potter as well as a magically depleted husband back to health. The fact that both survived had been a cause for much rejoicing on her part. She expressed in a private Yule dinner with Calvin how grateful she was that her beloved hadn't died.

Every one spoke their piece. Voldemort always spoke last and this year was no different. "This year as always I have appreciated my beautiful wife and wonderful children. In addition I have been most pleased with the pace our revolution has shifted to. As Rabastan has already said our bill which gives the right to a trial for sentient non-humans has successfully been passed by the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. This is the first definitive step we've made in over a decade. Other plans are also in effect and our goals are no longer out of reach. I am very pleased."

"Here-here," cheered Bellatrix.

He nodded to her and then said, "I will now pass out the gifts. Everyone knows the rules... if you open your present before everyone else has theirs, yours will be charmed to the side and you'll have to wait until everyone else has opened their presents. Now I will summon a gift from under the tree and then send it over to you."

The children spread themselves further apart so they would have enough room to open their gifts. Voldemort distributed the gifts. Once everyone had their colorfully wrapped packages, Voldemort sent up a shower of green and silver sparks with his wand. The children tore into the wrappings with enthusiasm. The chaos was a boisterous, let yourself enjoy being a child moment. None of the Dark Family's children were really allowed to be like the innocently expressive children of other wizarding families. Yule was truly a special time for them.

The adults were a bit more reserved. They opened each of their gifts and thanked the giver before opening the next. More than one of the adults wadded the wrapping paper up and threw it at the person they were thanking. Yule was also a time for them to express emotions more freely. Before long the adults were individually mobbed by the children in thanks for the wonderful gifts.

The gifts ranged from the extravagant to the simple. The gifts from the children to others were often very simple and often handmade. The gifts from spouses were often the more extravagant in nature. Draco's favorite gift was the miniature fire-breathing Chinese Dragon toy his father gave him. Blaise's favorite gift was the baby earth sprite from her mother, the sprite was a magical creature known for bonding to humans who raised them. Harry's favorite gift was the signed regulation snitch from Uncle J. Kira's favorite gifts were the muggle chemistry set from Uncle Calvin and the rare potion ingredients from his wife Jessica.

On Yule it was tradition for the Dark Family to eat the largest meal at mid-day. The Malfoy house-elves had outdone themselves this year. Every dish was exquisite. The simplest sides were spiced to perfection while the meats melted in their mouths. As usual the children were seated with the adults at a huge circular table. Everyone could see and talk to everyone else.

Conversation was turned as Regulus Black asked, "So where are we going until the new year?" This too was part of their traditions, not as ingrained at the gift giving or appreciation rituals. Every year the ladies of the Family would chose a place for them to vacation and every year Regulus would ask for details at the Yule meal.

"We were planning on an amusement part and resort this year," replied Ann Riddle.

"A wizzarding one?" asked her 'brother,' Uncle J.

"No, actually, a muggle one," responded Narcissa.

"Which one is open at this time of year?" asked Rabastan.

"Disney World," crowed his cousin-in-law enthusiastically.

The children had been quietly watching the progress of the conversation. They erupted in cheers. "I'll take that as support from the munchkins for your deduction," added his life partner with an easy laugh.

"You are correct, dearest cousin," said Bellatrix. "We felt that Disney World would be a fantastic place to go again. It has been five years since our last winter trip there."

"The same rules will apply as every other year, because we will be among muggles there is to be no unnecessary magic," said Jessica.

"Yes mom," responded everyone in unison. They knew the Pettigrews would meet them at Disney World.

The adults could easily remember the vacation at Disney World from five years prior. The quartet remembered it rather well also. That was the year Harry bonded with Cornelius and found himself adored by a rather wealthy family of muggles. The family had since been absorbed into Calvin's program dealing with muggles.

/ Harry and Kira had managed to wonder away from their parents after leaving the "It's a Small World" ride. Their mom had been busy holding their father in check. He wanted to tear the ride to shreds. Harry and Kira had found his anger only so amusing and so they decided to explore. A scream of, "My baby!" caught their attention.

They ran quickly toward the sound. What they saw would have terrified anyone else. A woman in a periwinkle blue dress was trying to move past a coral snake which was not more than two feet away from a two or three year old little boy. The snake was muttering 'Hungry, need food, where is food.'

The heirs could tell the snake was woefully underfed. Kira noticed a canvas bag not far from the snake. Harry said, "We need to feed the poor thing."

Kira said, "Grab that bag and distract him. I'll try to summon a mouse for him."

Harry nodded, scooted around people to grab the bag and then walked toward the snake. 'Little one,' he hissed, 'little beautiful one, please don't hurt the stupid boy.'

The coral snake slithered to look at Harry. The mother stood rock still because that brought the deadly serpent within a foot of where she had moved. The snake hissed, 'You speak? Why should I not hurt the stupid non-speaker?'

'Because my sister is getting you food.'

Kira had hissed, 'Mousy treat, Bitty meat, come to me, so mote it be.' A single mouse zipped to her hand. She grabbed its tail and walked to where her brother was speaking with the snake. She hissed, 'I have a mouse for you.'

The coral snake slithered past the mother and stopped before the heirs. Kira held the mouse over him and he struck lightning quick at the mouse. She released it and it fell to the ground with the snake's fangs deep in its fur.

The coral snake began to eat the mouse, while the mother grabbed up her son and backed away quickly. Harry waited until the mouse's head was within the snake's mouth and then quickly bagged the snake with the canvas bag he had picked up. The father of the little boy arrived then and saw the logo on the canvas bag. Voldemort and his wife arrived then and noticed the heirs as the center of attention. He could also hear the snake screaming, 'I hate confinement!'

Harry hissed, 'I'll let you out once we're away from those who would kill you.'

The father stepped up to Harry and said, "What do you think you are doing to my son!?"

"He rescued your son!" snapped Kira.

Voldemort stepped forward then, "My son has a way of charming the violence out of animals. I assure you that if he hadn't interfered your boy would be dead."

"He is right William. The boy hissed at the snake and it calmed down. The girl gave it a mouse and it took the mouse rather than attack our son," said the mother in periwinkle blue.

William said, “I apologize, I saw the logo on the bag and thought the worse.”

“The bag was lying near your wife and son,” said Kira, “I think the snake had been in it before.”

William took a deep breath. “That is not good.”

“Perhaps we should speak elsewhere. I am Tom Riddle,” said Voldemort as he held out his hand.

“William Dorlinth,” said the other man as he shook the offered hand./

Voldemort and William had spoken at length that day. The Dark Family had then helped him get revenge on those who had set the serpent on his family. William was a member of a powerful crime syndicate in Dallas. Another syndicate boss had decided to rid himself of the problem William was to his quest for power. Harry and Kira's interference with the coral snake had foiled the plot. After that William and his wife, Morgan, took the potion to ensure magical children. Their three year old daughter had recently performed accidental magic. The heirs wondered if the Dorlins would be at Disney World again this year.

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I know rather short, but I can't go into the vacation without spoiling stuff...

Review responses:

AN: I am sooo happy... this is the most reviews I've gotten yet(does happy dance)

Szihuoko THANK YOU!!!!!

scholcomp25 Glad you thought so, I'll update as quickly as I can.

NatashaNiracval Actually I did say he moved to view his reflection. The first paragraph he was looking with mystic sight while not being reflected, the second paragraph he moved so he was reflected. The other two maps... you'll learn eventually

Shadowface I'm updating... sheesh no need to curse me... actually you really shouldn't, I have a mirror spell up which sends the curses back to the caster. Hope your curses didn't hurt you.

gboyary I know Blaise is a boy in cannon, but this is an AU with a lot of subtle differences and some glaring ones, so I wanted a female best friend for Kira before they started school and I just couldn't see Pansy or Millicent fulfilling that role.

Jean-Claude Iscarot I thought so too, did you like what was used as the port-key? I'm not really good with pranks, but I will definitely think about a prank war in later years, especially after Harry ... um actually I need to not continue that thought. Thank you for reviewing basically every chapter, it is very encouraging.

Pearl of the Moon Thank you, I tried to draw in an audience that likes darker fics without making a truly evil one. I'm glad you kept with it past the dubious parts.

Kage Mirai Thank you. I just couldn't leave Harry at Hogwarts all alone.

Chapter 13

Secrets Shared

Hermione and Neville were surprised to see Harry with Kira, Draco, and Blaise on the Hogwarts Express at the end of the holiday. The six youths shared a compartment and Harry explained that Voldemort had sent him a port-key so he could spend the holiday with family. Hermione noticed the tans they had and was told it was because they had been vacationing near the equator. The quartet felt the Disney World trip and other Dark Family activities to be family matters and not for public knowledge. Until everyone was certain where Hermione and Neville stood with the Cause, many secrets would be kept.

During the train ride Harry told them about the prank he heard the Weasley twins planning. They all agreed to avoid the tainted deserts. They piled into one carriage when they arrived at Hogsmeade and rode up to the castle together. Severus Snape and Minerva McGonagall were both standing sentry at the doors as the children filed in to the castle. Harry was sure he saw a smirk in the snarky potion master's eyes. The six separated and walked to their respective tables.

The quartet noticed Dumbledore's veiled hostility as they sat. Kira flashed him a cheeky grin before sitting beside her brother. Harry leaned toward Gregory and whispered about the spiked deserts that would grace the table before long. Through quiet discreet whispers the entire table soon knew there was a prank planned against the school. Kira wondered if they should warn Snape, it was agreed that he should be told. Seventh year Marcus Flint was nominated to tell him. He walked up to the head table under the pretense of setting up a meeting about the quidditch team. Severus nodded and said he'd see him tomorrow at eight. Severus then nodded slightly toward the quartet as Marcus returned to his seat.

The feast was a loud and boisterous affair. Soon the main meal was cleared and deserts piled high on the tables. The heirs looked with mystic sight to see what deserts were safe. They then took a little of every safe item. That was the signal for the rest of the house as to what was safe. They left the little Peep-like pastries alone as well as

the bowls of candy that looked a bit like jelly beans and toffee. Suddenly a squawk was heard at the Ravenclaw table. The entire hall looked to see that one of the students had been transformed into a chicken. All around the hall students began to change into different animals. The only table unaffected was the Slytherin table. Even headmaster Dumbledore was transformed into a donkey.

The quartet suppressed their laughter. Without a second thought, Harry un-shrank the magic enhanced video camera he had gotten from Lucius at Yule. He began recording everything. Kira was quickly snapping pictures with her 35mm camera. Draco and Blaise couldn't wait to watch the videotape or see the developed pictures. As everyone started to change back Harry hissed a barely vocal parsel-spell to make his video camera invisible. Dumbledore stood and glared at the Slytherin table. "I will find the culprits of this prank and when I do they will enjoy detentions for the rest of the year, serving with the caretaker Mr. Filch," He announced angrily, "Everyone head to your dorms, curfew starts in fifteen minutes." There were only minor grumbles as the students complied.

The quartet burst into laughter as they entered the common room. Harry said between laughs, "Wasn't that so appropriate, Dumbledork as a Jackass?" The others could only laugh and nod their heads in response.

"You have to give it to the twins for getting everyone, even Weasel and his two cronies were transformed," said Draco.

"And did you see the eldest Weasel, he was, well a weasel," gasped Blaise.

The rest of Slytherin House was laughing. They were also listening carefully to the quartet. They now had a target for retaliation of future and past pranks. The laughter quieted as Professor Snape entered the common room. He looked over the sobering serpents and said, "Does anyone know who did tonight's prank?"

Harry said, "Yes sir, but we are unable to prove it."

Severus smirked, "I only need a name, the proof can be found later."

Harry walked over to the handsome fourth year and shook his hand, expressing that he had enjoyed the game and looked forward to their next encounter. Cedric told Harry that he was also looking forward to a rematch, but had truly enjoyed the game. Both boys were better sportsmen about the outcome than the rest of their teams.

Aside from quidditch practices and studying, Harry, Kira and Vorla searched the catacombs for a way into the final room of the Stone's protections. Harry was the one who finally found a way into the room during the last Sunday of the month. Harry led the quartet into the room only minutes after opening the wall. Inside the circular room, with only one door, was the Mirror of Erised. Harry smirked proudly; his prediction had been on the money.

"I wonder how it works as a trap," mused Draco.

"Probably ensnares whoever is searching for the stone. Harry did say that the book about it mentioned men and women wasting away staring at impossible dreams," responded Blaise.

"I don't think that's how it works," murmured Kira as she gazed at it with mystic sight. All four were very cautious about not letting themselves reflect in it.

"Yeah, there are some new spells attached to it. They are keyed to the existing enchantments, but definitely not a strengthening of the ensnaring ones," said Harry as he too gazed with mystic sight.

"What do you mean?" asked Blaise and Draco.

"The spells appear to be concealment and temporal in nature," answered Harry.

"Which implies that they are designed to conceal the stone, perhaps in a pocket dimension, rather than ensnare the pursuer," completed Kira.

"So how do we get it out of the mirror?" asked Blaise.

"There has to be some riddle to be discerned. The question is what is that riddle?" said Harry.

"Well, the person after the stone," began Draco.

"Quirrell," supplied Blaise.

Draco glared at her, "Quirrell wants the stone desperately. That will be his heart's desire, to have the stone to use to prove his loyalty and strength to his master. Am I right?"

"Makes sense," responded Kira.

"I think you might actually be on to something, who knew there are some brains in that platinum head of yours," said Blaise. Draco glared at her again.

Before Draco could respond Harry exclaimed, "Yes! That's it. You need to want the stone but not want to use it in order to break the spells." He quickly moved to stand before the mirror so that he could see his reflection. Kira watched the strands of magic touch her brother and saw an image overlay his. The image was of him pocketing the stone.

Draco and Blaise waited with baited breath. Unlike Kira they had no idea if Harry was okay contending with the spells on the mirror. After about thirty seconds he turned toward them. A mischievous smile tugged at his lips as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a fist sized red stone.

"We did it!" cried Draco.

"You mean Harry did it," Blaise corrected in her driest voice.

Draco scowled again while the heirs laughed. They enjoyed the 'sibling' rivalry between Draco and Blaise, it was always very amusing. Kira then said, "Let's go contact father and tell him we retrieved the stone." The other three nodded and headed back into the chamber.

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A little over a week later, as the quartet was studying in the library, Hermione and Neville stormed up to their table. Well Hermione

stormed, Neville just followed. Hermione leaned over the table and whispered, "The Weasel trio has been talking about Snape trying to steal something from Dumbledore. They're saying whatever it is, is being guarded by that three headed dog. They also said Snape tried to kill Harry."

Harry said, "Clubhouse now." The serpents stood and the six students swiftly made their way to Myrtle's bathroom. They carefully used hidden passages and stealth to reach the bathroom quickly and without anyone following.

Once inside the chamber Hermione said, "Okay, spill. What do you know concerning whatever Weasley is blabbing about?"

The truth? asked Kira.

Yes.

Kira nodded, "Sit and we will explain." Everyone sat. "Dumbledore is friends with an Alchemist named Nicholas Flamel. Flamel created an item of great power which Professor Quirrell has been attempting to steal all school year."

"Why?" asked Neville.

"Because he works for a wanna-be dark lord," responded Draco.

"A wanna-be dark lord?" asked Hermione.

"Yes, some dark wizard decided that Voldemort wasn't going to return to power and started to gather followers. Quirrell is one of his followers. His goal is to get Flamel's Philosopher Stone and use it to make his master virtually immortal," answered Harry.

"The Philosopher Stone?!" exclaimed Neville.

"You mean it's here at Hogwarts?" asked Hermione.

"Flamel must have felt Dumbledore could protect it better than Gringotts," said Kira.

"Do you remember the Dailey Prophet article on September first about vault 713 being broken into on the night of August thirty-first?" asked Blaise.

"Yes, and that was the vault Hagrid went to when he took me shopping in Diagon Alley," Hermione answered.

"He must have been removing the stone for Dumbledore. That was why the goblins reported that nothing had been stolen from the vault," commented Draco.

"That makes sense," nodded Hermione.

"So how do we stop him?" asked Neville.

"No need to," said Kira.

"But," began Neville.

"Because the stone is no longer where Quirrell can get it," finished Harry before Neville could work himself into a fright.

Both lions looked at the serpents questioningly. "What do you mean by that?" asked Hermione.

"A way was found to retrieve the stone without setting off Dumbledore's traps," replied Harry.

"Father has the stone safely hidden," added Kira.

Both lions paled, "You mean your father now has a way to achieve immortality?" asked Hermione.

"Yes and no," responded Kira.

"The stone is used to create the Elixir of Life, which will extend life and even bring a person back from the brink of death," Harry continued.

"But it doesn't convey true immortality," finished Kira.

"Yeah, if you stop taking the Elixir, you die," added Blaise.

"It's like an addictive drug with devastating withdrawal symptoms," observed Draco sarcastically.

"Its perfect if all you want is to extend your life for a finite amount of time because you simply stop taking it when you are ready to die," said Harry.

"So then Vol... Voldemort isn't planning on using the stone?" asked Hermione.

"Nope," responded the heirs.

"And even if he was, is that so terrible?" asked Blaise slyly.

Neville shook his head and whispered, "No, it's not."

Hermione quietly said, "No it's not terrible... its just hard equating the fatherly man we met with the monster portrayed by the wizarding world. I'm sorry I panicked and insulted your father." She looked at Kira.

"No apology needed, but I accept and forgive you," Kira replied.

"Since that's taken care of, who wants to raid the kitchens? We can shock the hell out of the Weasley twins if we go now," said Harry as he looked at a parchment in his hands.

"Sounds fun," said Blaise.

"Why not? They're the only tolerable Weasleys in the entire family," added Draco.

Kira, Hermione, and Neville just nodded. Harry then led them up the Hufflepuff passage because the badger dorms were closest to the kitchen. They exited outside the entrance to the badger dorms. They walked down two halls and stopped before a huge painting of a bowl of fruit. Draco tickled the pear and a green handle appeared on the painting. Fred and George froze in the middle of the kitchen as the six first years entered.

"Nippy," said Harry, "We would like a light snack if you would."

The house elf Harry looked at bowed, "right away master Harry Potter sir."

Hermione starred, she had never accompanied them on a kitchen run before. "What are they?"

"House elves," replied Draco.

"I've never seen them before," said Hermione.

"Well that's the sign of a good house elf," said Blaise.

"But..."

"Hermione, before you get all house-elf liberation on us, get to see them as they see themselves and for what they are," Harry said.

"House elves are bound beings. They do not do well when they are not tied to someone or something," explained Kira.

As the six sat down, with Hermione still rather dazed, the house elves piled food on the table. The twins were listening intently to the heirs without realizing it.

"Are they slaves?" asked Hermione.

"In the sense that they work for no measurable compensation, than yes they are," answered Kira.

"However, as Kira said they are bound-beings and therefore really can't survive as anything else," said Harry.

"What's a bound being?" asked Hermione. Neville also looked at them with the question reflected in his eyes. The twins wondered as well, they had never heard of bound-beings before.

"You're the born teacher, why don't you tell them," said Harry to Kira.

She nodded with a smirk, "There are four types of Magical beings; Light, Dark, Free and Bound. Light beings include unicorns and all creatures born of true purity. Dark beings include dementors and other creatures connected to the chaotic or entopic side of magic.

Free beings are wizards, witches, and true Elves who can choose either light or dark. Bound beings are creatures that are incapable of choosing light or dark, instead they are bound by ancient primordial magics to an object, family, or ideal. Without this bond they become disoriented and slowly lose their will to live. Every once in a while an individual bound being will break free or be unbound, the strength of will they developed before this point will determine whether or not they survive."

"Amazing... so you mean that if the house-elves were given freedom they would become unbound and die?" asked Hermione.

"Essentially, yes," answered Harry.

"Some, maybe one in every twenty would survive," added Blaise.

The twins decided to slip out at that point. They had just learned a very interesting bit of information that had never come up in any class thus far. They wondered what else might have been glossed over in various classes. They also were surprised that the serpents had brought two lions, even adopted, into the kitchen with them. The six first years noted when the twins left, but didn't bother to comment. They only stayed a little longer before heading back to library to finish studying.

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AN: This is out a little later than usual because I worked an extra day this week and it cut into my obsession time, um did I type that, yeah I did... anyway here are the review responses.

Review Responses:

Evilevergreen: I respond to reviews based on date received rather than chapter based... that is why this is the first time you are mentioned even though you reviewed chapter's 1, 4 &6. Thank you for the reviews and I hope you have continued reading up till this point(at the very least) and will read more(gives you puppy eyes)

NatashaNiracval The dark family has its lovey-dovey moments (ie. Yule) But they aren't always so sweet. The dark lord is more than willing and able to use unforgivable curses (just usually not on "family" and never on his children or wife) I'm glad you like the idea of the 'clubhouse' and don't mind you using it at all(I recall reading another fic where the Chamber was much more than the crappy catacombs of the books) I just went one step further and have it also be a hangout place for the quartet.

LizaGirl Thank you for the honor of being on your fav list. (smiles stupidly) Dumbledore's reaction won't be given in a blow by blow account... I'm afraid the words used in a multitude of languages by the most esteemed headmaster are barred from Hogwarts, fanfiction . net and in general polite company, I apologize if this disappoints you.

Shadowface You'll what?

Romulan Empress This story is based completely on the idea that dark is not evil and light is not necessarily good. I am very glad that you think I'm portraying it in an interesting way, that tells me I'm doing something right (I had no idea I could do that) I'm glad you like it enough to want more. And yes Slytherins do RULE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Szihuoko Does NP mean no plot? That confused me because I've never seen that before. I hope that's not what it means, I thought I saw plot, maybe I'm delusional... well thanks for the compliment on character development.

Kage Mirai Sorry I didn't expand on their vacation, but as I said it would give away "family" secrets before I'm ready to reveal them. Thank you for staying with me I appreciate all the support you've given me.

Jean-Claude Iscarot Yes you are. Thank you for another wonderful review. I'm glad you liked the port-key, I think a bag on lemon drops as the port-key would have been a little bit too mocking... well maybe not. Now you know what's with Quirrell... the hints were there, I think, but yeah he serves the other dark lord, who's not really a dark lord.

Pearly –gets up off the floor- Thank you, but please be gentle. I am trying to keep to my schedule of one a week and I think I'm doing it. I'm glad you like.

Chapter 14

Confrontations

The following weeks became hectic as the upper years prepared for O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s. Hermione insisted that the six friends start prepping for their end of year exams as well, even though there was still more than three months before the tests. Not surprisingly, to Blaise and Draco at least, Harry and Kira agreed with her. Most evenings found the group studying until curfew in the library, or past curfew in the Slytherin common room or clubhouse.

Hermione and Neville found themselves fully adopted by the Slytherins. In fact a bed had been added to each of the dorms for their use. From that point on any taunt, hex, or prank against the two lions was punished if a serpent saw it. Universally the snakes employed a lesser version of the house rules when dealing with them. Hermione and Neville were also adopting serpent mannerisms when dealing with members of said house.

The weather shifted and early spring winds moistened the grounds. Ravenclaw and Gryffindor had their quidditch game just before the last snows melted away. Gryffindor won. About three weeks later Hufflepuff played Gryffindor. Thanks to Cedric's incredible catch of the snitch and Wood being knocked out halfway through the game, Hufflepuff won 460-160. It was more than enough to knock Gryffindor out of the Quidditch Cup game. Slytherin played Ravenclaw during the second weekend in April. Harry caught the snitch before the first goal was made, ending the game 150-0. This was the fastest game in Hogwarts history, lasting less than five minutes. The Quidditch Cup would be played for by Slytherin and Hufflepuff.

Finals week finally crawled into everyone's perception. It arrived amid stark panic from the procrastinators and anticipatory fear for those prepared. There was intense excitement as well as grave uncertainty. For the seventh years their exams would determine their futures; for the sixth years their exams could mean the difference between taking the 'right' classes next year or not; for the fifth years their exams would be the first gage the ministry would have to judge them by.

Everyone else was also concerned, but not nearly as stressed as the upper years.

Finals week had one upside, it would end with the Quidditch cup game, awarding of the House Cup, and end of the year feast on Saturday. For some students the goal of Quidditch and summer vacation was all that kept them focused on their exams. By Friday everyone breathed a huge sigh of relief. The quartet knew they did well and from discussing the exams after the fact with Hermione and Neville, it was apparent that both lions did well also.

Friday evening the entire hall was chatting about their exams. Headmaster Dumbledore was distinctly absent from the head table. The quartet and two lions noticed it immediately from their place at the Slytherin table. They were certain Quirrell would go after the stone that night. They knew from Neville overhearing a not so quiet Weasel Trio that “Snape” knew how to get past Fluffy, the three headed dog. The six youths made sure to ask permission for Hermione and Neville to hang out with them in celebration of the end of the year, their ulterior plan was to call Voldemort and then play back-up against Quirrell. Ron, Seamus, and Dean decided to go after “Snape” that night as well.

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The six students went into the Chamber of Secrets directly from dinner. The heirs contacted Voldemort and relayed their information. The Dark Lord arrived only minutes later dressed in enveloping ebony robes. He smiled at the students and said, "Ms. Granger, Mr. Longbottom, I am about to cast some spells which will make me look different. I ask you not to be afraid when you see the changes."

They nodded slightly. Kira said, "You are about to see the Voldemort others normally see." Neville gulped as Voldemort turned away from them and began to hiss in Parseltounge. He finished by waving his wand and uttering five Latin sounding words. He turned back toward the children and the lions couldn't help but gasp in fright.

Voldemort's once soft blue eyes had become baleful crimson orbs which seemed to glow with unquenchable fire. His salted black hair

was now so darkly onyx it seemed to absorb the light around him. His once pale skin had become molted gray and scaly like a snake. His hands appeared almost claw like with long ivory-toned nails that were tapered to sharp points. His lips were thinned and fangs glistened as he smiled. The shadows under his robes seemed to be alive as he shifted.

"Very convincing," said Harry nonchalantly.

"Thank you my son," he hissed coldly in response. His voice had also changed. There was a non-audible growl in his vocal tones which was felt by a person's flight or fight instinct; it induced fear on the level of dangerous predator to weakened prey. Hermione and Neville were unable to prevent the shivers that ran down their spines. The quartet easily suppressed the instinctual fear because they had been trained at an early age to do so.

Harry noticed the instinctive fear and conscious uncertainty in the two lions. He said to them, "Hermione, Neville," both jumped at the sound of his voice, "You could always stay here or return to your dorms via the passageway if you are uncomfortable in the presence of Lord Voldemort. He really won't need any other back up; we're just doing it for experience sake." He indicated the rest of the quartet.

"Yeah, you should probably stay out of what's to come. I doubt you'll want to see what Lord Voldemort is going to do to Quirrell anyway," added Draco ominously.

"Draco!" exclaimed Kira, "Shame on you, trying to scare them."

"Young Mister Malfoy is correct though, daughter dear. They are not accustomed to my ways and should not witness what I will do to Quirrell." Voldemort said using the powerful hissing predatory voice.

"Are you going to kill him?" asked Hermione in a small voice.

"Eventually, yes."

Neville gulped. This was the Dark Lord everyone knew and feared. This was the ruthless man who had been dubbed a monster, yet he was going to get rid of a servant who served someone trying to be

worse than Voldemort had been in the past. He said quietly, afraid of Voldemort far more than he had been the last time he saw the man, "I think Hermione and I should head back to our dorms." Hermione nodded in agreement. She shared Neville's fear.

“That is probably best. Goodnight young lions.” His attempt to smile reassuringly sent another dozen shivers down their spines.

They quickly said goodnight to the quartet and then headed up the Gryffindor passage. This night was a true test of their friendship with the Slytherin quartet. Harry and Kira hoped they would understand that sometimes the Dark couldn't be anything but ruthless. They hoped that come morning the lions would still be their friends.

Voldemort motioned for the quartet to head into the catacombs. Harry and Kira led him to the wall leading into the final room of Dumbledore's protections. Harry pricked his finger with a conjured needle and touched the wall with his bloodied finger. He then hissed **Blood of the Builder which flows within now come forth to my bidding and create the archway in.**

The rough hewn stone seemed to crumble and an archway opened. Beyond the archway was a large circular room with only one door leading in. In the very center of the room was the Mirror of Erised. Quirrell hadn't arrived yet. Voldemort said, "I want you to place yourselves around the room. Should anyone else enter I want you to stun them."

“Yes sir,” the four voices rang out. They then moved to various places. They nodded to him once they were situated and he cast invisibility spells on them. The five dark magi waited.

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Neville and Hermione made their way up the Gryffindor passage. They both had their wands out with soft lumos spells lighting the way. Just before they reached the portion which would let them into the common room Neville stopped and asked, "What are we going to do now?"

Hermione paused as well, "What do you mean?"

"Vol... Voldemort is going to kill Quirrell. What are we going to do?" His voice sounded lost and Hermione could still hear his fear.

"I don't know..." she trailed off. "We've known, for quite some time that Kira's father was the Dark Lord. We knew before tonight that he has killed. We heard from her and Harry that he has even been the reason for his own followers to die. Logically we have known Voldemort was more than capable of killing anyone he wanted to, we just didn't acknowledge it until tonight. I think we blinded ourselves to what it means to have Dark friends."

In the soft wand light, Neville nodded. "You're right. We did know and we continued to be their friends. They are our friends," his conviction wavered slightly, "but they will either help kill or at least be witnesses to the death of an innocent man."

"We know Quirrell works for someone planning on replacing Voldemort. I think that shows he isn't an innocent man, but I don't know if that is enough reason for his life to be taken," Hermione chewed her lip.

"What if we told a teacher?" asked Neville.

"Who would we tell?"

"Professor Snape, maybe?"

"That's not a bad idea," Hermione replied. "He might even be able to stop Quirrell before he reaches Voldemort."

"Well then lets go into the common room and then head down to the dungeons," said Neville as he prepared to tap the brick which would open the wall for them.

"Actually, I've memorized most of the secret tunnels; it may be faster for me to go alone. Also that way you can mislead anyone looking for me."

“Agreed,” said Neville as he tapped the activation brick with his wand. Three light taps later the wall silently slid open into a small alcove of the common room.

The two wayward lions exited the alcove and momentarily starred at Weasley and his cronies as they tiptoed toward the entrance. “Where do you three think you’re going?” asked Hermione sharply.

The three boys jumped and whirled around to face the two traitors. Ron’s snarled haughtily, “Not that you two traitors care, but we’re going to stop Snape from stealing the Philosopher’s Stone from the third floor corridor for You-Know-Who.”

Neville laughed, “And how did you put that brilliant deduction together?”

Ron reddened and began counting on his fingers as he spoke, “First Snape tried to kill Potter at the first quidditch game which clearly shows he works for You-Know-Who. I saw him chanting the curse myself and the fact that Malfoy senior was helping him only proves I’m right. Everyone knows the Malfoys are Dark wizards. Second I heard from a Hufflepuff that he headed up to the third floor corridor rather than going to the dungeons on Halloween when the troll got in. Third a slimy dark person conned the trick to getting past Fluffy out of Hagrid; Snape is the only slimy evil git I know. And lastly Professor Dumbledore is away tonight so it’s the perfect time for him to try to steal it.”

If the two adopted Slytherins hadn’t known the truth the theory would make perfect sense. Since they knew the truth all Hermione and Neville could do was shake their heads in disbelief. Hermione said, “Wow, you guys really put a lot of thought into this plot, didn’t you?” Her sarcasm was lost on the trio as they all beamed proudly. “But I really need to burst your plot bubble. First Professor Snape and Mr. Malfoy were casting counter curses on Harry’s broom at the first match. That tells me neither were trying to kill Harry and therefore probably don’t work for Voldemort.” Her ignored the gasp and flinch the trio made at the sound of the Dark Lord’s name. “Second if Professor Snape suspected someone else was trying to steal the Stone he’d try to stop them while their distraction was keeping the

other teachers busy. Third any one can con Hagrid and with the places he goes its not difficult for the other person to hide their true nature.”

“So maybe the slimy git Snape isn’t after the Stone,” sneered Ron. Somehow his sneer wasn’t even nearly as convincing as a Ravenclaw sneer. “But whoever is after the stone will try to steal it tonight.”

“Then how about instead of harrying off and getting yourselves killed by Quirrell, why don’t we tell a teacher?” asked Neville. Realizing what he just said Neville blushed slightly.

“Quirrell?!” exclaimed Ron.

“We already tried,” said Dean as Ron said the name of the thief.

Hermione ignored Ron and asked Dean, “Who did you try to tell?”

“Professor McGonagall,” answered Dean.

“Hold on!” commanded Ron. “What the bloody heck do you mean by Quirrell?”

Hermione sighed, “Quirrell is trying to steal the stone.”

“How can you be sure,” interrupted Seamus.

Neville sighed as Hermione answered, “We know because he is the one who was cursing Harry’s broom. Also he has been heard communicating with someone he calls Master by Neville, Blaise and Kira.”

“So he’s the one loyal to you-know-who?” asked Ron with disbelief written all over his face.

Neville and Hermione shrugged. Neville muttered, “Don’t know, but I do know all of us should head to bed soon. After we inform Professor Snape of what’s going on, of course.” Hermione nodded in agreement.

“Nah-uh,” responded Ron. “No one is going to leave the dorms tonight.” He glared at the traitors as if daring them to contradict him.

Hermione faced Neville and winked as she said, “Alright, goodnight, I’ll see you in the morning.”

Neville nodded at her to show he understood and muttered, “Night,” before turning and heading toward the boys’ staircase. The Gryffindor trio followed Neville up the stairs. Once all four boys were in the dorm room and behind closed curtains, Neville snuck back out of his bed and tiptoed over to Ron’s bed. He opened the curtain and whispered, “Stupefy.” Ron didn’t have time to react before he fell unconscious. Neville smirked and returned to his bed after closing Ron’s curtain again. He knew Hermione would take care of informing Professor Snape.

About ten minutes after the five first years had headed up their respective staircases, Hermione snuck back down to the common room. She then walked out the portrait entrance and rushed through the many secret passages that the quartet had used over the year. She reached the dungeons without incident and walked swiftly to the door she had been told was Professor Snape’s office. There was light seeping under the door and Hermione knew he was in his office. She calmed her heart and gathered her Gryffindor courage. She knocked solidly on his door.

Severus Snape’s voice traveled easily though the closed door as his footsteps echoed in the office. “This had better be important.” The footsteps came to a halt casting a shadow across the light under the door just before the door swung open to reveal a sneering potions master. His glare lightened slightly as he looked down at Hermione and said, “Ms. Granger, you should be aware that curfew was over an hour ago. What are you doing here?”

“I know sir...” her voice and courage seemed to be fading. “I just came to tell you Quirrell is going after the Philosopher Stone tonight.”

Severus’ eyes widened, that was the only hint of shock as his voice calmly asked, “How do you know about the Stone?”

She was resolutely staring at her slippers as she said, "Um... the quartet, Neville and I have known for a while now. The quartet is going to stop him."

"That doesn't sound like my Slytherins." He paused briefly in thought, "Are you sure?"

"Yes sir," her head was nodding, "um... Kira's father is with them."

Severus felt himself stiffen. He wondered how the Dark Lord had gotten into the school without tripping off any of the dark wards. He looked at Hermione and could see she was shivering slightly, *does she know?* He asked softly, "Do you know who Ms. Riddle's father is?"

She nodded again and in a somewhat frightened whisper said, "Yes."

He was stunned yet none of his surprise showed as he mused, "I see... so is he going to stop Quirrell or is he going to steal the stone?"

Hermione, not realizing he wasn't asking her, replied, "Stop Quirrell."

Severus was again taken aback. He asked her, "And how do you know he won't take the stone while he's here?"

"Because he already has it," she blurted out. She quickly covered her mouth.

"What?!" Severus couldn't help but exclaim.

"Um..." Hermione burst into tears. This was not what she had planned. She had just betrayed Kira and Harry's trust. Suddenly telling Professor Snape what was going on seem like the worst idea in the world. She wanted to shrink inside herself.

"Ms. Granger, Ms. Granger there is no reason to cry," he attempted to sooth her. It didn't work as her sobbing grew louder. He reached out and gently gripped her shoulder, "Come sit down in my office. I'll go see to Quirrell and the Dark Lord. Stay here." She didn't resist him as he helped her sit. He conjured a cup of tea and poured some sleeping potion into it. He handed it to her and said, "Drink this, it'll

Lord would never be able to get into Hogwarts. His master had been wrong.

Voldemort smiled slightly, showing glistening fangs, "Now tell me, why should I spare your life?"

Quirrell shivered in terror again at the sound of his inhuman voice, "I was trying to steal the stone for you my lord." *Please bye it... please!*

Voldemort tutted, almost sadly, and said, "I do not tolerate lies. Crucio!"

The curse lashed Quirrell. The weaker wizard fell to the stone floor screaming in agony. His body spasmed as his screams echoed around the chamber. He thrashed as he screamed. Every nerve was aflame with agony and each second the curse remained felt like an eternity in the pits of hell.

"Finite Incantatem," Voldemort said lazily after about five minutes. He stood watching Quirrell as the man shook with after shocks and tears. "Now speak the truth. Who were you trying to steal the stone for? Who is your master? Who dares oppose me?!"

Quirrell looked up at the burning eyes of the Dark Lord. Some small part of him thought *this is a real Dark Lord* but his conscious mind made him lie, "N... N... No one... m...my..."

His stuttering response was cut off by a viscous, "Crucio! Do Not Lie To ME!" Voldemort's enraged voice commanded over the screams of agony of the breaking man. Quirrell's screams echoed and reverberated in a most satisfying way. "Finite incantatem," he said again after another five minutes. The screaming quieted, leaving a broken sobbing man crawling toward him whimpering.

"I can be merciful," said Voldemort. Quirrell looked up at him and shivered. There was no emotion at all on the face of the Dark Lord. "I can let your pain end; all I require is that you do not lie to me. I only need the name of your master. Who is your master?"

"L...Lord Baphomet," he gasped out.

"I see... he took the name of a dark deity once worshiped by the foulest type of muggle." He smiled cruelly at Quirrell. "Tell me his birth name and I will let you live."

"I don't know it!" cried out Quirrell in terror as he moved to his knees.

"Pity," Voldemort's voice did not relay any pity or mercy. "I will grant you a painless death. As I said I can be merciful." Quirrell made a choking sound that may have been begging for his life. Voldemort raise his wand and said, "Avada Ked..."

"Stupefy," rang out in Dumbledore's voice as the red light of the spell sped from his wand as he entered the room. Severus Snape was beside him, his wand also drawn. Voldemort dodged and cast a shield.

Four stupefies flew from various places about the room, all aimed at the two new professors. Severus recognized the voices of his Slytherins. Both professors managed to dodge the spells and cast shields of their own. Quirrell flattened himself to the floor.

Voldemort hissed **Wand of my enemies reverse your spells' direction.** He looked at his new guests and said, "Stay out of this Dumbledore. This is between Quirrell, myself and those who think to usurp me. I am the Dark Lord and all of the Dark will bow to me, including his pathetic master."

Quirrell had drawn his wand while Voldemort addressed Dumbledore and Snape. He raised it at Voldemort and cast in a clear, rage filled voice, "Avada Kedavra!" Sickly green light burst from the wand, but it didn't come from the tip. It shot out of the base of his wand and struck him in the chest. Quirrell slipped to the ground, dead. His wand clattered and rolled away.

"It seems the fool discovered my parsel-spell the hard way," commented Voldemort banally.

"I won't let you leave here with the Stone, Riddle!" exclaimed Dumbledore.

“The stone is not here Dumbledore. It is at my manor, where it has been for over two months.”

“So you are now immortal, Tom?” asked Albus.

“No less than I was before. The stone is safe and will be returned soon.” **Stupefy them my heirs.** He smiled coldly and sent his strongest area effect spell at them. Their shields shattered.

While Voldemort cast the spell Kira and Harry moved toward the two professors.

I'll stun Snape, you get Dumbledore.

Roger.

Before Severus or Albus could re-erect their shields, two stunning spells flew at them from less than two meters away. The potions master and aged headmaster fell to the hard stone, unconscious.

Voldemort levitated the dead body after removing the invisibility spells.
“Open the passage, son.”

Harry nodded and tapped a pattern on the wall with his wand. The archway opened and the five Slytherins and one dead body went through. Voldemort told the children to send enervate spells at Severus just before Harry closed the archway. They went to the chamber and the quartet said goodnight to Voldemort before going up the Slytherin passage. Voldemort directed his personal port-key to take him to Diagon Alley. He left to craft his message to Lord Baphomet. The quartet was fast asleep in their dorms by the time Severus made it back to the dungeons to check on them.

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AN: Year one will only have one or two chapters more. The next update may take longer than a week, but I will do my best to keep to my schedule. Thank you for reading, and if you do, please review, it helps motivate the lazy writers/typers. (I'm the latter)

Review Responses:

momma-dar Thank you and welcome to my humble story. I am doing my best to keep to my once a week plan, but its not as easy as it sounds.

Shadowface I'm sure I find out eventually... anyhow hers' another chapter, hope you liked. And yes they were educated last chappy.

Tiffany Kleinhans Thank you. I really appreciate encouraging reviews. I hope you continue to enjoy my story.

NatashaNiracval Hermione is a muggle-born, there is a greater anger toward what is seen as slavery among muggles than there is among wizards. There won't be a SPEW in this story, but that doesn't mean Hermione won't end up fighting for rights for other non-humans.

Gred & Forge are two of my favorite characters, so I guarantee their will be more of them when I write later years(which I really hope to do) The prank was "random" but I personally don't believe in coincidence and so people wound up as "appropriate" animals.

Sorry about the grammar... I've never been the top person in that area.

You will learn more about Harry's feelings on him killing his parents in later years. (Good god I really need to write the later years)

Thanks and I hope you enjoyed the update.

Pearly I only see Ron and Percy as "bad" guys in the family. So it's actually really easy to portray them that way. The twins wouldn't/can't exactly snitch on them. I hope you enjoyed this chapter and thank you.

frozen-lake I believe that if Tom Riddle had experienced a moment of true clarity in his life he would have retained his sanity. In this story he did, he also found love. These two events grounded his ego and kept him a real man rather than an evil psychopathic monster, they allowed him to become a true Dark Lord rather than the lunatics that came before him.

Dumbledore is one of the best characters to portray in a different light and after the fifth book I lost all respect for him and now see him as a manipulative bastard.

Thank you for your wonderful review and I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

Her Stubborn Lioness I try my best...(smiles sheepishly)

Thank you for your kind words. I plan to parallel as many of the books as I can... so yes there will HOPEFULLY be sequels. I hope you enjoyed the new chapter.

Romulan Empress As you can see there wasn't a fight between Dumbledore and Voldemort over the Stone... Voldemort doesn't want the Stone. He just doesn't want anyone with plans to usurp him to have it.

Thanks for reviewing and I hope you enjoyed the chapter.

Kage Mirai Thank you... here's the next chapter, hope you liked. Family secrets... the Riddles really do care for each other.(smirks... "like that's a secret")

eriee I'm glad you enjoyed the last chapter. I hope you liked this one too. Thank you for your review.

Szihuoko Oops silly me. Sorry, I had just never seen NP before in a review, thank you for explaining. Dumbledore has rather long reaching plans... I'm really hoping to get year two started so that I can show how dastardly he can really be. Thank you for the review and I hope you enjoyed the chapter.

Chapter 15

Choices

Morning arrived. The sun rose early with a bright cerulean sky scattered with soft fluffy white clouds. The day looked like perfection, but perfection is an illusion. The Post Owls arrived as the school sat down to breakfast. Only those involved with the previous night's events were unsurprised by the front page of the Daily Prophet. The excitement of the end of the year Quidditch match was dulled as students looked at the picture of the ministry building and the headline of the article.

The building and even the headline weren't what turned stomachs. The part of the image which terrified on an unconscious level was the body of Professor Quirrell. The man was spread eagle, strung up between two of the Roman style columns of the building. Written in blood, probably his, was the message, "Baphomet you are no more a Dark Lord than you pathetic servant. There is only one Dark Lord and that is ME!" The Dark Mark floated under the message like a signature.

Hushed whispers could be heard about the Hall. The headline clarified any confusion as to what the message really meant. The headline read, "He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, Has he returned?" The article told anyone who did not know about the Dark Mark being He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named sign. The reporter pondered if the message was truly from He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named or if it was simply one of his followers. He also questioned who Baphomet was. The article did exactly what Voldemort wished, it made people question his "death".

Albus Dumbledore, leader of the light, kind caring headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Defeater of Dark Lord Grindelwald was virtually quivering in rage. Minerva was shocked at the waves of anger flowing from the normally calm, composed man. Severus glanced at Albus after skimming the story and knew the man was about to blow up rather spectacularly. He knew he would protect Kira Riddle if the old man lashed out, he only hoped Albus hadn't lost all semblance of reason.

Kira and Harry skimmed the article before handing the paper off to Draco and Blaise. The quartet had expected something like this. Kira and Harry remembered the crafted message to the muggle crime boss a few years back and thought about how clear their father always was when he threatened someone. They didn't let the story ruin their appetite, no one at the Slytherin table did.

Hermione and Neville looked at the article. The look they gave each other clearly said "We Knew". Hermione whispered, "We couldn't have done anything." Neville nodded.

Neville whispered, "Baphomet must be the wanna-be Dark Lord."

Hermione looked thoughtful, "I wonder if he was muggle born."

"Why?" asked Neville.

"Because Baphomet is a dark god worshipped by muggles who pretend to practice dark magic and sometime do really cruel things," answered Hermione.

Neville thought over her words but before he could say anything else Dumbledore's voice thundered across the Great Hall. "Ms. Riddle!"

The hall grew deadly silent. Kira looked up at the head table. She kept the smirk at his anger from gracing her face. She responded, "Yes Headmaster?"

"Where is the Stone? Theft is grounds for expulsion!" He was standing with anger burning in his blue eyes. His voice was harsh and commanding. The threat he could pose to a person was not hidden by his normal grandfatherly façade.

The quartet looked at each other in surprise for a few moments. They had figured Dumbledore would be angry, they didn't know he would be stupid about it. Kira rose to her feet, Harry beside her. Her voice rang out clearly as she said, "I have stolen nothing."

"I demand a gathering of the school governors and presentation of proof on behalf of my sister," said Harry. "Unfounded accusations will cost you your job headmaster!"

"I will not stand here and be slandered by a senile old man who thinks he can control whoever he wants," Kira proclaimed.

Albus Dumbledore growled, "You were both in the forbidden corridor last evening..."

The Doors of the Great Hall burst open with a loud bang, interrupting his rant. Screams erupted from the students nearest the doors as a tall serpentine figure strode it. His crimson eyes swept the Hall. "I don't recall seeing any children last night when we met in the third floor corridor."

The hall froze in fear at the sound of his voice. The Slytherins, while fearful, hid their smirks of satisfaction. The color drained from Dumbledore's face. Twice in as many days, Voldemort had gotten into Hogwarts without setting off the Dark detection wards. He raised his wand and pointed it at the Dark Lord.

"Now Albus, is that any way to greet a former student?" Voldemort's smile chilled the hall. He continued, "Especially when I came to return something to you?"

Dumbledore thought quickly if there was anyway for him to kill Voldemort without harming the students. He couldn't think of one. The student body as well as the teachers held their collective breath. Albus finally asked, "What are you returning?"

Voldemort laughed a deep sadistic chuckle. The mirth didn't seem to reach his eyes. "The Philosopher's Stone, of course," he said as he held the blood red stone aloft for all to see. The entire hall seemed to gasp in shock.

Dumbledore couldn't honestly believe his eyes. Voldemort had the means to immortality in his hand and appeared to be ready to return it. He knew not to trust dark wizards. Albus asked, "How do I know that is the real one and not a fake you are returning?"

Voldemort's eyes narrowed, "You doubt my word?" His voice held the threat of violence. "Because we are surrounded by so many innocent," he sneered the word in such a way as to terrify the

students, “children, I will not kill you for questioning me. Choose someone to retrieve the stone and I will return it to you now.”

Dumbledore said, “Ms. Riddle, get the stone.” Many students were outraged by his command and silently cheered as Kira answered.

Kira snapped, “Get it yourself! I do not do your bidding.”

Voldemort chuckled, “Leave it to a Slytherin to see through you, old man.”

Before Dumbledore could respond Neville said, “I’ll get it.” The entire Gryffindor table, except Hermione, gasped.

Voldemort crooked up one side of his lips as Longbottom stood up and began to walk toward him. He stood imposingly still as Neville approached. He asked, “What is your name young lion?” His voice was not kind, but it was not as harsh as when he spoke to Albus earlier.

“Neville Longbottom, sir.”

“I see...” he paused as if thinking, “You have your father’s bravery young Mr. Longbottom because I am sure you know who I am.” Neville nodded in response. “Can you prove your Gryffindor bravery and say my name?”

Neville gulped slightly and nodded again. He said, “You are Lord Voldemort.”

Voldemort smiled, revealing glistening fangs. He held the stone out toward Neville. He said, in a voice strangely un-mocking, “Well done mister Longbottom. Here is the stone.”

Neville took the remaining steps to be able to grab the proffered stone. He took the fist sized stone; his hands were not trembling. He knew this “monster” would not hurt him. He nodded slightly before stepping back. He turned around and walked confidently up to the head table.

Voldemort watched Dumbledore watching him and smiled. He raised his wand and Dumbledore's grip tightened on his. The Dark Lord spoke as Neville reached the head table, "I shall be leaving now. Try to remember that I am not as dead as your ministry would have you believe." He didn't lower his wand as he hissed **Home**. His personal port-key/wedding ring activated. The Dark Lord vanished from Hogwarts' great Hall.

Neville placed the Stone on the head table just as he heard Voldemort hiss something in Parseltounge. He turned and walked back to his place beside Hermione. He was not surprised to note that Voldemort was already gone. Kira said, "Headmaster, seeing as the thief of your precious Stone was Voldemort, I require an apology for your slander or I will take this to the school governors and I will have your job."

Albus glared at her. He couldn't believe how completely she had just assured her position of innocence. If he didn't apologize, the entire school would turn against him and he'd lose his job. He plastered his false smile on his face and said, "I owe you my deepest apologies Ms. Riddle and for falsely accusing you I give Slytherin twenty points as compensation."

Kira, we can't exactly get decent revenge if he loses his job so soon

True.

Kira seemed to think for a moment before she replied, "I will accept that, but if you ever accuse me falsely again, I will see that losing your job is only the beginning of your punishment."

Harry smoothly followed her by saying, "I will gladly help, but enough talk of punishment. I believe Neville Longbottom deserves some applause, after all he stood before Voldemort without flinching, a true sign of a Gryffindor." Harry began to clap. Quickly the quartet and entire Slytherin house was clapping. As the serpent house stood to make it a standing ovation the rest of the school joined in. Neville blushed as he sat down beside Hermione, who had stood to join the ovation.

The applause died down and Dumbledore tapped his glass to gather everyone's attention again. "I wish to say a few words now that this morning's most unusual activity has ended. I hope to see everyone at the Quidditch Championship this afternoon. I wish the best of luck to both Hufflepuff and Slytherin in the game. I also hope the rest of the day is much less dangerous. Thank you." He sat down. A house elf popped in next to him about halfway through breakfast. Albus left moments later.

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“No, God dammit! Are you deaf or just daft?” the voice was enraged, echoing in the Headmaster’s circular office.

“Sirius, please listen to me,” Albus softly pleaded.

“No! I told you after you first explained everything to me. I will not put Harry through that.”

“But don’t you care? Don’t you want to know what that monster did to him?”

Sirius took a deep breath and said as calmly as he could, "Listen to me Albus, I care. I love Harry as my own son. He is all I have left of two of my dearest friends and I desperately wish to know what his childhood has been like up till now." A brief smile of victory flitted across Albus' face and was quickly wiped away as Sirius continued. "But I will not authorize the use of Veritaserum. I know what that shit feels like and I will not subject a child to it."

"I know you want to protect him, but..."

“But nothing!” Sirius screamed as he slammed a fist into Albus’ desk. “I am his Godfather! I am his legal guardian and the only family he has left. You are the reason he spent the last decade with a mad man, not me! I don’t want to hear any more of your shit concerning him. From everything you’ve told me he is a happy well adjusted young wizard with five incredibly close friends.”

“Slytherin friends.”

“And two of them are bloody Gryffindors, unless you’re lying again.”

“I have never lied to you Sirius.”

“No you only lied to the ministry,” he said bitterly. “You told them you KNEW I was James and Lily’s Secret Keeper. You were not present when the spell was cast, you had no way of truly knowing anything, yet you told them under oath that I was the Secret Keeper. The only reason I got a trial with the use of Veritaserum was because Peter showed up and claimed under oath that I wasn’t. Your lies almost sent me, an innocent man, auror and member of the Order of the Phoenix at the time to Azkaban! God forbid if something had happened to Peter, I would have rotted in that hellhole because of you. Then you had the nerve to send Harry to the Dursleys even though Lily and James made you promise to give him to Peter or Remus before even considering Lily’s sister. You fucked up Albus and rather than admitting it, you tried to cover it up.”

“I apologized to you after the trial.”

“Yes you did... but did that bring Harry back to me? Did that erase the time I spent surrounded by dementors? Did your apology mean anything to me? You betrayed me Albus. You betrayed Lily and James. You betrayed Harry.”

“I only did what I thought was best.”

“Best?! You only did what you thought was best? Harry spent his most formative years with a monster hell bent on conquering the world because you ‘did what you thought was best’. Well clearly your idea of best just isn’t good enough now is it?”

“Sirius, please calm down. Do you remember why Voldemort went after Lily and James?”

“Yes, I do, some stupid prophesy about their son being strong enough to defeat Voldemort.”

“That is why I need to know what he did to Harry. I need to know if we can still save Harry and if he can still fulfill the prophesy.”

Sirius grabbed a chair and launched it across the room in fury, “If you think I’m going to let you manipulate Harry like that you have another thing coming. Harry is no one’s pawn, least of all yours. If you really truly hope Harry will turn to the light and fight Voldemort than you are going to have to butt out!”

“He needs my guidance.”

“He needs nothing from you,” Sirius ground out angrily. “You will keep your nose out of his life. I will try to bond with him, but if you continuously interfere, you will drive him away from the light forever. Just from what you’ve told me, I know he is going to be more like Lily than James. And unless you’ve forgotten in your old age, Lily could not be manipulated. She was a Slytherin, through and through, my guess is so is Harry. But I’m praying that if you butt out, he will be very much like her and be the kind caring person she was. Now I am going to go out to the quidditch pitch and find a seat for the game. Afterward you will introduce Harry and me, preferably in your office. Tomorrow, he and I will use your Floo connection to go to the manor I have been preparing for us since I received your letter. I will see you after the game.”

Sirius strode from the room. Albus looked at his door after the man had left. He had no idea the man still harbored such anger toward him. He had wronged Sirius Black ten years ago and would never be forgiven. Albus wondered if he really was the best choice for Harry's guardianship. He couldn't do anything now, but in a few years something else may just turn up.

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Hermione and Neville shyly approached the quartet after breakfast. Harry smirked, “I think you almost gave your house a heart attack Neville.”

Neville smiled slightly at the joke. He and Hermione had agreed to tell the quartet about telling Snape. They just hoped they'd be forgiven for betraying the Slytherins' trust. Hermione was almost certain that they wouldn't be.

“What’s wrong?” asked Kira as waves of guilt and uncertainty washed over her and Harry’s empathic senses. Harry tilted his head in inquiry.

“Can we go talk in private?” asked Hermione quietly.

“But not the clubhouse,” added Neville uncertainly.

Harry nodded, “Sure, we can go to the Slytherin common room or an empty classroom if you’re not comfortable with our territory.” He was beginning to suspect why they were so nervous. *Do you think they told Dumbledore?*

I don’t think they would have betrayed us that way. If they told anyone my guess would be Professor Snape.

Harry agreed with his sister. Hermione said, “An empty classroom would be nice.”

Harry nodded somewhat grimly. “Follow me,” he said as he began to walk toward the astronomy tower. He thought to Kira, *They did tell someone... if it was Snape I think we can forgive them, maybe. If they told Dumbledore we have to rearrange their memories so they don’t know anything important.*

I agree, I just hope we don’t have to manipulate their minds. I hate hurting people I care about.

I know, so do I, but with what they know...

I know, Kira’s mind-voice was rather sad.

Harry opened the door of an empty classroom near the base of the tower. He ushered everyone inside. Kira cast a quick dusting charm and hopped up on the teacher’s desk. Draco and Blaise strode in and leaned against two of the students’ desks. Harry closed the door and cast a locking and silencing charm on it. Hermione and Neville were in the middle of the room as he did this. Hermione felt a small shiver run down her spine. She suddenly knew that if Harry and Kira felt the betrayal warranted it, she and Neville would not leave the room the same way they had entered it.

Harry said, "Okay, we're somewhere we can talk privately. What do you have to tell us?"

Neville gulped slightly. Hermione hardened her resolve and was still barely able to whisper, "We told Professor Snape."

The room was deadly silence. *Did they only tell him or did they also tell Dumbledore?*

I'll ask. Harry asked, "Is he the only one you told?"

Hermione took a deep breath and said softly, "No... we also let slip to the Weasel trio that Quirrell was after the stone, but that was an accident." She seemed to be begging with her voice, but begging what Harry wasn't quite sure.

"How did that accidentally slip?" asked Draco in his most sarcastic voice.

Neville replied, "They were sneaking out when we got back. They thought Professor Snape was stealing it for Voldemort. It just kind of slipped out that Quirrell, not Professor Snape was after the Stone."

"So you led them to believe that Quirrell worked for my Father?" asked Kira.

"Kind of," replied Hermione. "We only told them that Professor Snape was not after the Stone, but Quirrell was. They are the ones who assumed that meant he worked for Voldemort."

The quartet chuckled. Harry said, "They must really be wondering what the hell is going on now. Okay, so you screwed up and let three idiots know a bit of the truth, but why did you tell Professor Snape?"

"We hoped he'd stop Quirrell from reaching you guys..." Neville whispered.

"We didn't want his blood on our conscience," completed Hermione just as quietly.

"Is that really a valid reason to betray your friends?" asked Blaise sharply.

Hermione nodded. Neville looked down at his feet unable to speak. Kira asked, "Would you do it again?"

"If I thought I could keep someone who doesn't deserve to die alive, I would," Hermione said. "I don't want to betray my friendships, but there are some things that I inherently must do if I am to live with myself. I can't even fathom killing another person and the fact that Voldemort was going to kill one of my professors... I just..."

Are they strong enough to remain our friends?

They are still very innocent, brother. Perhaps if we agree to keep them out of the darker loop of our lives, at least for now...

That should work. They are already bound to keeping our other secrets and I really hate losing friends, especially when their only 'crime' is having a light-side view of the world.

Harry broke the silence. Draco and Blaise had remained quiet, knowing the heirs were telepathically communicating. He said, "We don't want to lose your friendship. We care about you and can even understand your having a conscience. But we need you to decide if you can have friends like us. We are Dark, we are ruthless when necessary, and we are not going to change who we are for anyone. In spite of that we still want you as friends."

"And we are willing to leave you out of the loop when we feel you would be unable to handle it," added Kira.

"We can remain your friends?" asked Neville hopefully. Kira nodded slightly.

Harry said, "But only if you think you have the intestinal fortitude to handle knowing we are capable of killing. I will tell you this now, Kira and I have the blood of five people on our hands already. We do not regret that and if we feel it's necessary we will kill again."

"Five people and one troll for me," commented Kira.

“And one troll,” amended Harry with a smirk.

“The troll would have killed us,” said Hermione, “That was self defense.”

“And the other five were revenge,” responded Harry. “Can you handle knowing what we are and have done? Or will you decide we are too evil and walk away? The choice is yours.”

The two lions both seemed lost in thought. Kira said, “We will leave you to think about it. Tell us at the Quidditch game or after it. All we ask is that you tell us before we leave for the summer. Think carefully about your decision. If you choose to sever our friendship, there will be no coming back.”

Harry nodded, "Tell us soon." He then undid the charms on the door and left the room.

"I hope you're strong enough," murmured Blaise as she followed Draco and Harry out. Kira followed Blaise, her thoughts were an echo of Blaise's sentiment.

[illegible]

The quidditch stands filled up rather quickly. The teachers' box once again had guests. Severus Snape scowled as he approached the box. Sitting behind Albus' seat were two of the Marauders. Sirius Black was seated comfortably next to Peter and Jasmine Pettigrew. Their two little rug-rats, whose names eluded Severus, were squirming in the seats between their parents. Severus nodded toward Jasmine and glared at Sirius, his eyes skipped over Peter all together. The ex-auror looked at the ex-Death Eater and smirked.

Severus remembered that smirk as if he had seen it only yesterday. He felt irrational anger grow inside himself. Severus truly did not want to be there at that moment. Severus attempted to walk past them without a confrontation, but lady luck was not with him. Sirius said, "Do my eyes deceive or do I spy Snivelus (forgive the spelling) before me?"

Severus stiffened and his onyx eyes bore into the cobalt he had grown to hate over the years. "Well if it isn't the black sheep of the Black family. Aren't you supposed to be six feet under by now?"

Sirius chuckled, "Nope. As old Mad Eye would tell you, constant vigilance keeps you alive. That was one lesson he drilled into my head and I never forgot it. But enough about me," he flashed one of his patented smiles, the smile which would turn a woman or man into putty in his hands. Severus always had hated that smile. "I hear you are the Potions Professor and head of your old house. How does it feel to have the son of James Potter lead your house to victory?"

"Sirius, leave him be," Peter said to his fellow Marauder.

Severus sneered, "I am proud to have Lily's son lead our former house to victory. I find it rather easy to forget the boy is James' son because he is nothing like the arrogant prick his father was."

Sirius stood and growled, "Do not ever insult James in front of me." His voice was soft and threatening.

"Struck a cord did I? Miss your ex-lover?" Severus taunted. He knew that nothing had ever happened between the two best friends because James had been straight as an arrow. But Sirius had been openly bisexual and everyone in their year had assumed Sirius had his eye set on his best friend.

Sirius darkly said, "If this was not a stand full of innocent people, I'd curse you into the next millennia."

"Ah Gryffindor nobility, or is that stupidity? I forgot how annoying it could be when fully developed in a grown man. I wish you hadn't reminded me."

Peter interjected then, "Stop it, Dumbledore is almost here. If he sees you sparring he'll get annoying."

Sirius nodded, "Well I guess our verbal sparring will have to wait until later. I know Albus will tell you, but you need to bring Harry up to his office after the game so we can be introduced."

That was the information Severus had been dreading. He did not want his favorite Slytherin *wait did I just think that?* turning into a miniature James and spending time with Sirius was a sure way to push him that way. Severus decided to ask, "Do you know where your godson has been the last ten years?"

Sirius nodded, "Yes, Albus told me. But have no fear; I am certain that a couple summers with me will set him straight."

"So to speak," muttered Severus as one last barb before moving past the Marauders and finding a seat. Sirius glared at him but refrained from retaliating as Albus smiled at him. Sirius nodded in return and resumed his seat. Severus was steaming. He hated the easy going arrogance which Sirius and James had always had while at school. Though perhaps it was a feeling of betrayed friendship which truly drove Severus to hate Sirius; Severus could still remember pre-Hogwarts when Sirius had been a good friend.

His musing was cut off as Lee Jordan began announcing the teams. Severus couldn't help the satisfaction dancing in his eyes as Harry flew out as Slytherin seeker. The boy had his father's natural flying talent and in spite of Sirius' words he knew the Gryffindor alum wished Harry was in Gryffindor not Slytherin. Severus watched his team take to the air and had a feeling that he would be holding on to the Quidditch Cup for another year.

Sirius watched his best friends' son fly around the pitch. He smiled; it was a sad, sweet reminiscing smile. He watched Harry and in his minds eye saw James soaring on his old Silver Arrow. Sirius wiped the moisture from one eye before a tear could form. He clapped loudly as Harry flew past the teachers' box.

The fourteen students landed in the center of the field. Madame Hooch released the snitch. A few moments later the Bludgers and Quaffle were released as well. The game was on. The Hufflepuff team once again showed mettle the likes of which Hogwarts hadn't seen from them in ages. Scoring went back and forth, almost goal for goal. Slytherin began to have penalties called on them after about forty minutes as their dirtier tactics came to the fore. The score

soared to dead even 200-200 at the mark of eighty minutes. Suddenly Harry dove.

Harry had spotted the snitch less than two meters behind Cedric's head and decided to attempt a Wronski Feint. He heard Lee announce his dive and internally cheered when the Gryffindor announced that Cedric was following. His timing was impeccable as he pulled out of his near vertical dive at the very last second. Cedric didn't catch the feint in time and ploughed into the ground. There was a crunch as he hit, either his arm or broom, Harry couldn't tell.

“Potter executes a flawless Wronski Feint and takes out the Hufflepuff seeker,” announced Lee. “Madame Hooch calls a time out as Cedric Diggory is taken from the field. This game is over ladies and gentlemen. Without a seeker Hufflepuff has no way of winning.”

Sirius had been on the edge of his seat as Harry dove. When he pulled out of the dive, Sirius cheered. *You should see this James. Harry truly has your gift for quidditch.* Sirius watched Harry during the time out. He noticed his godson using the time to continue looking for the snitch. The boy's emerald green eyes sparkled as they darted about the pitch.

The whistle was blown after Madame Pomfrey took Cedric from the field. Not more than five seconds after the whistle sounded Harry dove again. He shot toward the Ravenclaw stands and pulled up holding the small winged golden ball aloft. The final score was 350-210. Sirius cheered as loudly as any Slytherin was. In fact he was almost as loud as the entire Slytherin section.

Severus just smirked in satisfaction. He had the Black Heir cheering for his Slytherins. Severus nodded to Albus as the old man gave him a meaningful look. He prepared himself to interrupt Harry's well earned celebration. Severus left the teachers' stand before anyone else did.

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AN: This is about half of what I had left, so I decided to stop and post this much... that means there now is only one chapter to go in year one... sorry this is taking so long, but I added stuff to this chapter.

REVIEW RESPONSES:

Szihuoko Well as you can see the Heirs really do care about their friends... it will be up to Hermione and Neville to decide. They didn't really punish the Gryffindors because Severus "is" a Death Eater.

jImac Thank you very much. I plan (if I find it within myself and my muse to keep to it) to parallel all the books.

Shadowface (smiles) Yeah isn't it... I figured this is a HP fanfic, he might as well do *something*.

lonelysltherinslowlydying Dumbledore is the antagonist for me, I can't kill him yet. Though I love your suggestion...(I'm bi too)

LizaGirl Thank you. Yes Dumbledore was angry (but he's not completely stupid) he is however beginning to plot for next year... Severus is marked... that is all I will definitively say for now.

PhoenixFangScar Thank you. I try my poor best.

Tiffany Kleinhans Thank you very much... and I love long reviews... makes me feel special. I actually don't hate Dumbledore, I just really have problems with manipulation of innocence (and he makes a most entertaining antagonist). Thanks again and I really hope I'm able to do the other years as well.

Romulan Empress Thanks. Believe it or not, except for the name, I had the wanna-be Dark Lord stuff worked out before I started writing. You'll see more of Baphomet later in the series.

Kage Mirai Thank you. I will endeavor to do my best.

James-Padfoot THANK YOU. Now I will answer your questions as best I can (without spoiling future story lines). The question will be in *italics* and the answer will be normal.

1. From whom did Harry get the map from?

Well, even though this is AU, one of the Marauders may in fact work for Voldie... didn't I mention the Pettigrews were part of the Dark Family?

2. How did Harry get the cloak, if James left it under Dumbledore's supervision?

Well... Kira also has a cloak. These were gifts from Voldemort. Harry's isn't James' old cloak.

3. How did Sirius Black get off scott-free if Peter Pettigrew wasn't convicted? Even if they did blame him, surely they'd hunt him down? After all, he married, and will be having his daughter attend Hogwarts? If I am not mistaken...

You are not mistaken. The simplest explanation is that someone other than Peter or Sirius was the Secret Keeper, but I may be misleading you.

4. Will you still be using the canon for OOTP? If so, what about the prophecy? Wouldn't that mean a father-son head off?

Who's to say the Prophecy isn't a fake?

5. You never did mention when Kira was born, but referred to Harry and her as twin. They are even the same year. If Voldemort was threatened by Harry, and went out of his way to kill him, why didn't he kill him/take revenge when he could? Did Ann influence that? Please explain.

Sorry I can't give everything away yet.

6. Where is Remus Lupin and Sirius Black?

Well here was Sirius. As for Remus, he doesn't even know Harry's been "found" yet.

7. Why didn't Dumbledore administer any form of punishment when Harry returned from the Yule/Christmas holidays??

Dumbledore still wants to convert Harry. Punishing him will only alienate Harry. Dumbledore is a lot of things, but being a complete moron is not one of them (though he does some pretty stupid stuff every so often)

8. JK has stated that Blaise is a male. However, it is only recently she has cleared that for us, and by the date of this story, you had no way of knowing.

Yeah, but as I've said before I needed a female best friend for Kira and I just couldn't see the other Slyth girls in the role.

9. Even though Harry has been raised by Tom and Ann, does he now have any resentment towards Tom for killing James and Lily? For being left an orphan and tortured by the Dursleys..Does he know WHY Tom tried to kill him? And why he chose to later keep him? Why did Tom send Death Eaters to find baby Harry, was it to kill him at first? How did Tom know before DD what happened, had he sent the killers?

Harry knows a lot more than any of my readers. Tom sent a very **TRUSTED** Death Eater to kill the Dursleys and... well that's more of the twists to be revealed later.

10. Is Harry's wand core still the same, and what is Kira's wand like?

Wands? Oh yeah... you'll find out first chapter of second year.

Thank you again for your review, I hope I've answered enough to keep you interested. Also I promise that if something happens and at some point I decide not to finish this series, I will explain what was going on.

Chapter 16

Ending the Year

Hermione and Neville sought out Kira, Blaise and Draco in the stands. The three Slytherins made room but remained silent as the two lions joined them. Neville sat beside Kira while Hermione sat next to him. He leaned over and said quietly, "We've been talking all morning." Kira nodded that she heard him. He continued, "Hermione and I still want to be your friends."

Kira looked toward him and her eyes strayed over to Hermione. She raised an eyebrow in question and Hermione nodded. Kira said, "We will talk to my brother after the game."

"Thank you," said Hermione. She sincerely cared about Harry, Kira, Draco and Blaise. She felt she was capable of handling their darkness, just as long as she didn't have to witness it.

Neville smiled shyly. He was glad he wouldn't be losing the friendship of the four Slytherins. He quietly said, "I'm sorry. I hope you'll be able to forgive me."

Kira replied, in a quiet voice as well, "You already are, but you will have to re-earn our trust. But enough on that, the game is about to start." Kira thought to her brother, *We haven't lost our lions*. Her mental voice was filled with relief.

We'll have to test their honesty before we accept them again.

I know. I believe they are sincere in wanting to remain our friends. I hope we will be able to trust them.

So do I. Wish me luck.

You don't need it, but good luck.

Thanks.

Lee announced the teams and the game began.

Severus made his way through the throng of Slytherins. Almost the entirety of the house was surrounding Harry and the quidditch team. He reached Harry without too much difficulty. The Slytherins moved out of his way without any real prompting as he approached Harry. He leaned down to speak into the seeker's ear. "The headmaster wishes to see you Mr. Potter."

Severus led Harry through the assembled students. More than one commented “Good game” or “Great play Potter” as they passed. Severus remained silent as Harry followed. Harry thanked the well wishers but he did not pause. Harry watched his Professor for unconscious clues as they walked. Whatever the Headmaster wanted, it was not something Professor Snape approved of.

Harry shook his head at the emotional outburst. He had been fully aware, empathically, of professor Snape's rising anger as they walked. He could feel a hint of fear and uncertainty under that anger and wondered what it meant. He followed the snarky potions master up the revolving staircase. He was unsurprised when Dumbledore's

voice said, "Come in," as they reached the door. The two Slytherins entered the eclectic office.

Albus Dumbledore stood in front of his desk. Another man stood only a few feet away from him. The other man was ruggedly good looking with dark ebony black hair tied at the base of his neck. His blue eyes were a shade of cobalt that seemed very familiar to Harry. The dark haired wizard had a slight smile on his lips and something about the joy and sadness in his eyes tugged on Harry's heart in a confusing way. The man was studying Harry as Harry studied him.

Harry turned his attention away from the enigmatic new wizard and asked, "You wished to see me, Headmaster?"

"Yes Harry..."

"Sir!" Harry snarled the word. "I have told you before; you DO NOT have that right."

Albus tried not to appear ruffled, but the wand-less magic and anger Harry sensed told him otherwise. The headmaster said, "Mr. Potter this is Sirius Black."

"The auror?" gasped Harry just before he did the strangest thing. Harry hid behind his stunned Head of House. Severus stiffened. He had never before been used as a human shield and everything he had seen in Harry's personality said this was out of character.

"Harry," said Sirius softly. His voice was coaxingly quiet. "I'm not going to hurt you."

Harry peaked out from behind his shield. Albus was amazed. There was fear in the eyes of the boy-who-lived. The aged Headmaster had never expected to see that. Harry snappishly questioned, "Then why are you here?"

Sirius sighed, "Harry, I don't know if you know this, but I'm your godfather and legal guardian."

Harry's face paled. Severus managed to glance down and was almost certain Harry was preparing to run. Harry looked up at Severus. The

elder Slytherin could see pleading in the youth's eyes. He tried to relay with his eyes that his hands were tied, Harry seemed to understand. Harry looked back at Sirius and buried his fear.

Almost rashly he said, "So you're here to give the headmaster permission to use Veritaserum!" He also moved out from behind his professor. He may not be a Gryffindor, but he had Slytherin pride. Harry refused to cower before the man who planned on destroying his life.

Sirius winced and quickly said, "No Harry, I have forbidden Headmaster Dumbledore from using Veritaserum on you. I don't believe he has the right to demand knowledge of your childhood. Nor would I ever submit a child to the effects of Veritaserum, especially not you."

Harry looked confused. He asked, "Then WHY are you here?"

Sirius replied, "I'm here because I'm your guardian. I'm here to take you home with me tomorrow."

Harry snapped, "I'm not going."

"You have no choice Mr. Potter," said Albus Dumbledore before Sirius could respond. He had been watching Harry carefully and had expected that answer. As Harry glared at him he continued, "You can willingly go with Mr. Black for the summer or you can come under my guardianship. I guarantee you will not be returning to the Riddles." Albus saw the rebellion and anger in Harry's eyes. He knew, however, that he had won a small victory. Harry would not refuse to go with Sirius now. Albus was staring intently at Harry as the boy thought about his options. Albus had been amazed at the loss of control the boy had displayed, but he had been hoping for just such reactions.

Severus was infuriated. Albus was selfishly ripping Harry away from the life he knew in order to mold the boy into a miniature version of his father. Severus wished he had a port-key to pass to Harry, to rescue him as the Dark Lord had done over Christmas. Severus knew Voldemort was an evil bastard, but somehow the man had raised a boy that Severus would have been proud to call son. He glared at Albus and Sirius in turn before placing a hand on Harry's shoulder.

Harry looked up at him and Severus nodded, it was the only comfort he could give. Harry turned back toward the other two wizards and said in a resigned voice, "Fine, I'll go with Mr. Black."

Sirius scowled slightly at Severus but smiled at Harry. "Harry, please call me Sirius or Padfoot."

Severus felt a transformation in the boy. His shoulder muscles suddenly seemed to loosen. Severus removed his hand and wondered what happened. Albus watched as Harry's face seemed to light up. He wondered why. He didn't wonder long.

"Padfoot?" Harry asked. Sirius nodded. "You're a Marauder?"

Severus suppressed a groan as Sirius answered, "I take it you read Wormtail's book, Pranking with Prongs?"

Harry nodded, "Kira and I virtually memorized it before coming here."

Sirius laughed. "And have you followed in our footsteps? Your father was a marauder after all."

"He was?"

"Yep, James Potter was Prongs."

"Well, if you're Padfoot and my dad was Prongs then who were Moony and Wormtail?"

Sirius' smile got bigger, "Moony was Remus Lupin and Wormtail was Peter Pettigrew."

"Cool..." breathed Harry.

Sirius couldn't help as his smile became a smirk. "Somehow I didn't picture a muggle expression from you."

Harry shrugged. He seemed completely at ease and Severus felt himself become worried again. Harry said, "So you're going to take care of me this summer." He sounded slightly less opposed to it.

“And every summer until you are of age. I hope that after you get to know me, you’ll accept me. Your parents were my best friends. I loved them more than my own family. I loved you as a son, I still do. I want us to be friends.”

Harry let the words wash over him without effect. He asked, “What time should I be meeting you tomorrow?”

“Be here after Breakfast tomorrow,” responded Albus. “The password is Peppermint Imps.”

“So I won’t even be allowed to see my friends off in the carriages?”

“Albus, he can say goodbye to his friends. We don’t have to depart immediately in the morning, the manor won’t go anywhere.” Sirius told this to Dumbledore with a slight edge to his voice.

“Alright,” responded Albus, “After you see your friends off in the carriages you will report here. Now off you go. I believe you have a party to attend in your honor.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow, Harry,” Sirius said this and held out his arms. Harry looked at him with a slight tilt to his head. Sirius laughed depreciatingly and withdrew his arms, “Sorry, I was just kind of hoping for a hug.”

Harry shrugged, “See you in the morning.” He turned and left the office.

Severus nodded curtly to Albus and then followed his young student. He smirked in pleasure. The pain in Sirius Black’s face at Harry’s cold shoulder had made him feel much better. He just hoped Harry would continue to see through Sirius. He prayed that Harry would remain the Slytherin Severus had come to care about. He shuddered at the thought of Sirius changing Harry.

Harry walked back to the Slytherin dorms. He was well aware of professor Snape shadowing him back so he kept to the main corridors. Harry reached for Kira’s mind. *Where are you guys? Common room or clubhouse?*

We're in the common room. What did Professor Snape need you for?

Dumbledore found Sirius Black, my godfather and legal guardian.

Did he authorize Veritaserum?

No, he was actually strongly against it.

Good. By the by, Hermione and Neville are both here still. They haven't chickened out. I told them about Brandon and Jack's gang.

Did they understand?

Yes, they believe they are capable of being our friends so long as we don't tell them about any really dark stuff we do.

Harry mentally laughed Well I'm glad we won't lose them as friends. I really hated when Lenora's family moved away after Brandon's death. I understood the reasons, but you know...

I know.

Harry broke off the connection as he arrived at the Slytherin entrance. He said, "Serpentis." He entered the common room. Cheers rang out and Harry smirked. He noticed professor Snape hadn't followed him in. Harry sketched a quick bow to the cheerers and then walked quickly to the corner where the quartet and lions waited.

Hermione smiled at him very tentatively and said, "Congratulations, that was an amazing game."

"Thank you. So I take it you think you can stomach being our friend?" He sat down. Kira hissed a Parsel-spell to mask their speech just in case anyone was trying to listen in.

Neville nodded while Hermione said, "Yes. We thought about what you did and some of the more philosophical discussions we've had over the year. We realized that while you are dark you aren't exactly evil. I mean you killed people who have killed innocents. You have protected Neville and me throughout this year even though I'm

muggle-born and Neville's Dad opposed Voldemort. You haven't exactly been evil, you know?"

Kira, Draco, and Blaise all smirked while Harry nodded with a smile. He said, "Yes I understand. I'm glad you remembered what we said about the darker side of magic. We promise not to tell you about the really dark stuff, but we need to know you are not going to ever betray our trust again."

Neville said, "You have my Wizard's oath."

Hermione nodded, "You have my Witch's oath."

Harry and Kira slid into a powerful telepathic rapport. Their combined senses probed Hermione and Neville. Both lions shined with sincerity. There was a purity to their hearts and minds that was like a warm sunny day. The dark heirs felt the Light that did not burn, the Light of purity tempered with understanding and love. Kira's heart leapt for joy as Harry whispered *They are still our lions* within her mind. They dropped the link since they had their answer and the link was draining over long periods of time.

Harry nodded, "Accepted. Now then let's try to enjoy tonight."

Draco looked at Harry and asked, "Harry, what's wrong?" Blaise noticed something was off as well. Hermione and Neville couldn't see whatever Draco was seeing but when Harry sighed they knew he was right. Something was bothering Harry.

Harry said, "Well my doom has been pronounced."

"Really? You look alive to me," commented Draco.

"Although I do see a grim in you aura," added Blaise.

"Har, har," responded Harry in a sarcastic voice. "No I'm not dieing, but I may as well be. Dumbledork found my legal guardian."

"You don't mean Black do you?" asked Kira. She was only saying it so that Hermione and Neville didn't learn about the telepathy she shared with Harry.

"Yep Sirius Black."

"The auror?" asked Draco.

"Ex-auror," corrected Blaise.

"Yeah him. As you know, he's my godfather and the person James and Lily Potter named as my guardian in their will."

Draco asked, "Did he authorize Veritaserum? I remember that was a major bee in Dumbledore's ass all year."

"No he didn't," replied Harry. "But I will be under his supervision every summer until I'm seventeen, starting this summer."

"What about our summer activities?" asked Draco indignantly.

"And your birthday?" added Blaise.

"And Cornelius?" asked Kira.

Harry sighed heavily, "Well he was once a marauder, so he may be understanding enough to let me have my familiar sent to me. He convinced Dumbledore to let me see you guys off in the morning."

"He may not be as bad as you think," said Hermione. As the quartet glared at her offended she clarified, "Well I mean when I was learning about the wizarding world I came across Harry's name and everything surrounding Voldemort's so called downfall. According to what I read Sirius Black quit his top auror job at the ministry in order to search for Harry. I mean that seems to say he really cares. So he may be a lot less likely to condemn your dark nature."

"Also, don't forget, the Black family has been traditionally dark," added Neville.

"Yeah," commented Draco, "In mother's family, only Andromeda and Sirius ever openly opposed Voldemort. And Great Aunt Black was openly supportive of Uncle Tom."

"So there is a chance I may be able to convert him?"

“Anything is possible,” commented Kira. “Especially when a person cares about you, I mean look at the changes in father after meeting mother.”

Harry smiled, "Thanks, I think I will be able to handle this summer after all."

"That's the spirit," commented Hermione.

[illegible]

The quartet and two lions had a quiet breakfast followed by hugs and promises to owl one another. Harry and Kira clung to each other for almost ten minutes before she entered the carriage. No one cried, Slytherins didn't ever cry in public. Blaise, Draco, Hermione, Kira, and Neville waved from the carriage window as it lumbered away from the castle steps. Harry took a deep breath and then turned to head to the headmaster's office.

Harry arrived at the gargoyle and gave the password. The statue leapt aside and Harry walked up the moving stairs. He didn't even get one knock in before Albus called for him to enter. He schooled his face to be devoid of emotion. Harry entered.

Sirius and Albus were standing near the fireplace. There was a cheerful blaze burning in it. Harry knew how they would be traveling. Albus asked, "Where is your trunk, Mr. Potter?"

Harry reached into a pocket and pulled out a small box (trunk) just larger than a box of old fashioned matches. He shrugged, "I had a sixth year shrink it for me." He put it back in his pocket.

Sirius spoke before Albus could annoy Harry more. “We’re traveling to the manor via the Floo network. Have you ever used Floo powder before?”

“Yes, its how I usually traveled when Kira and I spent time with Draco’s family.”

"Wonderful," Sirius said.

“So what’s the name I call out?”

“You’ll need to call out Black Rose Manor. It used to be a family summer home, but when my mother passed away I took it as my manor and let my brother have Black Manor.”

Harry nodded, "Okay, so where's the powder?"

Albus held out a box of the green powder. Harry ignored him by taking a handful of the powder without acknowledging him. He then tossed it into the fire. The fire turned brilliant green. Harry stepped in and called, "Black Rose Manor," in a clear concise voice.

FIN

[illegible]

AN: Year One is Over... Year two will be on its way, just as soon as I start writing/typing.

Review responses: First I just want to re-thank everyone who reviewed this story.

Thank You !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank You !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank You !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank You !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Okay individual thanks from chappy 15...

lonelysltherinslowlydying Thank you for reviewing... umm
Sirius may go dark... other stuff... yeah thanks.

Kage Mirai Here is the end of first year... I hope you enjoyed it. Thank you very much for staying with me for so long.

James-Padfoot This chapter was slightly shorter, but I really needed to stop at about the halfway point, if nothing else than for my own sanity. Thank you very much for your interest. I really don't get annoyed by questions (they sometimes even help me think) but I can't always promise to give answers. Thank you for your kind words and I understand the whole bursting with questions thing/ lack of discipline.

Romulan Empress This was the last chapter of year one. I hope you enjoyed it. Thank you for being a rather constant reviewer... it makes me feel special.(smiles) Year two will be forth-coming... just not as soon as this was.

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OKAY THIS IS A SPECIAL TEASER FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO SCROLL ALL THE WAY TO THE END OF A CHAPTER. (smiles evilly) Warning... there is minor slash (male/male) in this teaser...

Harry stepped out of the fireplace of Midnight Rose Manor. Standing in the foyer of the ancient Black estate was a man about Sirius' age. He had shoulder length wavy brown hair and laughing hazel eyes. He said, "Hello Harry."

Harry smiled, "Hi... You know Sirius is going to be very angry with you when he steps through."

The man smirked, "Not my Padfoot... he doesn't know how to stay angry at me."

"I don't?!" exclaimed Sirius Black as he appeared in the fireplace. Instead of continuing a rant he quickly turned and cast a Floo locking charm on the fireplace. He spun back only to find himself in his lover's arms being kissed silly.

Harry made a sound and walked from the room. "I guess my room has the snitches all around the door. Please remember silencing charms!!"

Sirius came up for air and looked at his beloved, "He's too young to know about the need for silencing charms."

"You were younger than he was when you first understood the need for silencing charms."

"I guess you're right. I missed you."

"You were only gone two days," he laughed at Sirius' pout.

"But I had to put up with Dumbledore and Snape."

"My poor puppy, perhaps a massage would make you feel better," he breathed into Sirius' ear. As he nibbled it slightly he said, "I know it would make me feel better."

Thank you again for reading and reviewing. I hope to see you in following years.